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# ESSAYS

D.

BY

THEOPHILUS PARSONS.

(FIRST SERIES.)

FIFTH EDITION.

BOSTON:  
WILLIAM CARTER AND BROTHER.  
1862.

BX 8724

P3

1862

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1855,  
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I have concluded to publish these slight and hastily-written papers for the little good that they may do, but with great reluctance from the fear that their faults and imperfections may be attributed to the System of Truth, of which they present a few portions. Whatsoever is found in them new and just and interesting, belongs to that system; and the obscurities which mingle with the light I have endeavored to borrow, are my own. I call them Essays, only for want of another name; for if I knew one of less significance I should certainly adopt it. They have been somewhat circulated in manuscript, - the purpose for which I began to write them, - and I have yielded to the advice of others and put them in print, only in the hope that they may sometimes lead a reader to seek in the writings of Swedenborg and in the WORD as it is resplendent with the light which these writings unveil, the Truth that is now descending from Heaven.

T. P.

Boston, 1845.

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## SUBJECTS OF THE ESSAYS.

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LIFE.

PROVIDENCE.

CORRESPONDENCE.

THE HUMAN FORM.

RELIGION.

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

## L I F E .

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THE wants and cares of life occupy most persons and employ their thoughts exclusively ; but there are always some who would answer the deeper questions which the worlds without and within them constantly suggest. The enigma of existence presses upon them. Human destiny, the Nemesis of an old religious philosophy, is to them, if they are feeble, a terror ; and to the strong and weak alike, it is a mystery. If religious tendencies lift up their thoughts, they seek a God whom they may worship ; and they who seek, find Him. But clouds are all around Him. The statue at Sais, above which "the learning of the Egyptians" had written "I am whatever Is, or Has been, or Will be," wore upon its face an impenetrable veil. How many, in all ages, have sought to raise this veil ; how many have labored to reconcile the world into unity with itself, and into a higher unity with God ! Is this

end reached at last? Has this veil been lifted? I believe so; and will try to sketch the outlines, the bare and naked outlines, of that system of the laws of existence, which gives back his creation to God and fills his creation with Himself.

I begin then with saying that there are three degrees of Life—or of Existence. To those who hear this for the first time, the words have no meaning; and I must first endeavor to explain the truth they express before I use it as the means of explaining others. There are three degrees of life; and they are in every thing that exists, because they are primarily in Him from whom every thing exists. In God is Infinite Love,—Infinite Wisdom,—and the eternal Action of that Love by or through that Wisdom. And in Him these three are always one. For His perfect Love perpetually desires and seeks that which His perfect Wisdom contemplates, and precisely that which His Power is always effecting. To repeat this in other words, His Power is incessantly exerted, for if it ceased for a moment, the universe would cease to be; and this Power always acts in perfect conformity with His Wisdom; and this Wisdom is always warm with the life of His perfect Love. He is always active, and every Action is guided by his Wisdom and springs from his Love. Thus these three elements of the

Divine Nature, Love, Wisdom, and Power, are distinct, yet essentially coöperative and conjoined into Unity.

The universe exists from Him; for before Him, or without Him, there is nothing; or else it would be another and an equal Eternal and Infinite. And as He creates all things from Himself, so every thing reflects Him; the universe is His mirror, and every thing in the universe bears his impress and is significant of Him. The three elements of his divine life are, in Him, perfectly one; but when they come forth from Him to do the work of creation, and when they exist in his works, they are more or less separated and one or another becomes more or less dominant; and this may be regarded as the first cause of the infinite variety among the existences in His universe. Thus there are three heavens. In that which is nearest to Himself, His Love is the ruling element; because they who compose that heaven have permitted Him to infuse His Love into their wills, so that it has become their love; so that they love by His love and what He loves. They who compose the heaven which is only lower than the highest, have not permitted him to do more than open their eyes and their hearts to His Wisdom. But they see the beauty of His divine order; they perceive that out of that order grows justice; and they love justice; they seek always to

know and to do what is right, and they find what they seek, and thus they love their neighbor, and have the happiness of that love. Below this is another heaven; and its angels have reached their eternal home by the way of obedience; they acknowledge and adore His power; they listen to His Word; they obey His commands, and in this they find their happiness. Thus, these heavens are severally arranged, animated and governed by the elements of His Divine Nature. Opposite to the heavens are the hells; and they who dwell in these unhappy states, have not permitted Him to awake in their hearts, either a love for Himself, nor a sense of right and thence a love of the neighbor, nor even a disposition to obey. They have no conscience, and they have no heaven. But they have their own happiness, because He gives them all the happiness such as they can enjoy; but it is not the happiness of heaven; and they are necessarily subjected to such punishment and coercion as may prevent their casting away, or destroying for each other, the happiness they may enjoy.

Between the heavens and the hells are the earths of the universe and all their inhabitants; and all of these have three distinct planes or degrees in their minds, or three distinct grounds on which the elementary principles of their life and character rest. These three degrees in human minds, correspond to the three

peavens, just as these correspond to the three elements or degrees of the Divine Nature. For every man may have a disposition to obey vivified within him, and this will place him in close connection with the lowest heaven, where that love rules. Or, he may not stop there, but, while on earth, (only on earth, for as the tree falls so it lies,) he may permit his Father to awake in him a sense of right and a love of his neighbor, and then he will have within him the vital influences of that higher heaven and its happiness; or he may permit Him to fill his affections with His love, and then, in his spirit and through an eternal future, he will dwell near His throne even in the highest Heaven, and amid its light and bliss. And these three are in perfect harmony and constitute one heaven. If we go further down the scale of being, we still find the image of this Trinity in Unity. Thus every individual man has a soul, and he has a body, and would die but for the constant action of the soul within and through the body. Again, he has affection, which produces thought, and through thought action. Indeed, we may say that every thing, animate or inanimate, exists for the sake of some end or purpose, and this may be regarded as that which it seeks or *loves*; and it has also a form or organization adapted to its purpose, which form corresponds to its *design*; and it has an activity or operation by which its character or quality

is manifested and its purpose brought into *effect*. If we bear with us this same truth to the realms of nature, we shall find in the same correspondence,—the animal kingdom, characterized by desire, affection, will; the vegetable kingdom, where there is organization and life but without consciousness or will; and the mineral kingdom, which only obeys the impulses which it receives. Thus, beginning with God, we find these three degrees, and go where we will through his creation we find them also, for everywhere we find Himself. And this is one of the many senses in which we may say with His Word, “Whither shall I go from thy spirit, or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven thou art there; if I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me.”

I have thus endeavored to exhibit the existence, the origin and nature, of the three degrees of being, because it is by them, through them, and in constant conformity with them, that God created and creates and ever sustains all that is. And therefore, they are so intimately connected with the laws of being, that the knowledge of these degrees must constitute the foundation of all understanding of these laws.

Of these laws themselves, the first thing to be said,

is, that they are not dead laws, once enacted by sovereign power and written on the opened pages of creation, and there left. They are indeed nothing else than the methods of His divine action in constantly creating; for, with Him, creation was not a work once done, but a work that is always in doing. Time belongs not to His nature, but to ours. And the laws of existence are but the methods and the order whereby He is perpetually pouring forth life and being to all things. I again repeat, for it is a central truth,—that *existence* is but *perpetual creation*.

It is to be well remembered, that He alone has life in Himself; He alone *is* life. He alone is the vine; all other things and beings are the branches, the leaves, the blossoms, the fruit. He alone is the Fountain; all other things are but drops of the ever-rolling and unbounded stream of being. He alone is *any thing* by Himself; and all other things are constantly created by Him, from Himself.

And how? Life, one effluent life, yet containing in itself and consisting of the infinite elements of all possible life, flows forth from Him, *first*, into the heavens nearest to Him. And because it is from Him and is His own life, it forms and moulds them and all who are in them into an image and likeness of Himself. But it is *Life*; it stops not on its way; it still goes on; it passes through these heavens and into the hea-



vens next to these, and forms and moulds them also into a remoter image and likeness of Himself. Still the stream of life goes on; passing through these, it flows into the lowest heavens and forms them into the same image and likeness, but still on a lower ground and with a more dim resemblance.

Because this life, in its origin and essence, is Infinite; because its constant effect and tendency is perpetual and infinite growth and reproduction, there is none the less in God, although all the life of creation is always proceeding from Him. And the stream of life flowing into and through the heavens, and into and through men on earth, still abides with all; for it is one effect of the original divine nature of life, that every thing and every being that lives not only loses nothing by imparting, but lives on condition that his strength, his thought, his affection, his life, shall perpetually flow forth in use. "He that would *save* his life shall lose it," because the command, "Freely ye have received, freely give," is constant and universal.

From the heavens, therefore, life again goes forth. But let us stop, for a moment, to look at its effects and manifestations in the heavens. The Love and Wisdom which fill and constitute them, are in their source and their divine perfection, alike ineffable and inconceivable; but when they reach the highest heavens, and the created human beings who are there,

they enter into their wills and understandings, and become their love and their wisdom. And because these angels are near to God, and love Him supremely, the love and wisdom they receive, although limited and defined in them, are so little corrupted or perverted, that they remain almost as inconceivable by us as before. Their thoughts are not as our thoughts nor their affections as ours; and their blessedness nothing upon earth enables us to conceive. But when the love and wisdom which constitute their affections and thoughts, pass down into the lower heavens, there they become more appreciable by us; they become what the wills and understandings of the angels of those heavens make of them. They are still the means of indescribable happiness; but they are nearer, and in the lowest heaven much nearer the love and thought which may be experienced or conceived on earth.

Below the heavens are the earths; below the angels are the inhabitants of earth. While we live here, we are not arranged and classified as they who are there, because our life here is but preparatory for and introductory to that; and as a means of discipline for that end all the elements of life are mingled here. It is the constant effort of Providence to develop and vivify in every human being the highest plane or degree of his nature, which is capable of free and voluntary life;

further than this He does not go; for, of all things, He always guards and keeps that freedom which is the essential condition and foundation of all good. All men have in them capacities for the highest gifts which bless the angels. All men have planes and degrees of mind and affection answering to all those of the heavens, from highest to lowest. But those which are not developed here, which do not receive life here, which the man does not by his free, voluntary, and active coöperation, permit the influent life of the heavens to vivify and fill,—these remain forever closed.

The life of the heavens, or the divine love and wisdom which constitute the life, the affection and thought of all in the heavens, flow through them and enter as they can the minds of men. Wherever it is possible, the divine love and wisdom, modified only by the wills and understandings of the highest angels, enter into minds of kindred character upon earth. Where this is not possible, but still, good and truth though of a lower kind, reign, such persons live, because some among the angels are media of life to them. Some among the angels do, by their own wills and understandings, so modify, so form and qualify the divine love and wisdom, that it becomes adapted to the states and wants of such men and capable of becoming life in them. Where even this cannot be, where men have turned from good to evil, from light

to darkness, and will not receive the life of the heavens, even they still live; for in the regions of evil and of darkness are those who so pervert the influent life they receive, as to qualify and adapt it to find reception with and give life to all of their unhappy resemblances on earth. Thus it is, that every man, whatever he may be and whatever he may choose to be, lives, because Divine Providence finds in the heavens or in the hells appropriate media through whom he may receive the life which suits his own good or evil nature.

But while to all men is thus supplied the life they love, it is not permitted to rule them; for good spirits have no desire to *possess* those to whom they are mediums of life, and evil spirits are not permitted to do so. Thus the influences which supply life are always so met and equalized by opposite influences, that the man himself has *life*, but has it in *freedom*. Earth, with all who dwell upon it, is between heaven and hell. In all things and beings here, influences from above and from below, meet. Every man has near him as the media of his life, good and evil spirits. With good men, the former agree with the will and the choice, and the latter only so temper the influence of the former, as to leave the man in freedom; with evil men the case is precisely reversed. To every one it is given, not merely that he *may*, but that he *must*, by

his own will and life, determine whether the influence from above, or that from beneath, shall prevail with him forever.

The heavens, the hells, and the earths between them, are inhabited by human beings, and we have considered the laws of their existence. But all of these human beings have worlds round about them adapted to their natures and their needs. Let us now look at these worlds; and first at our own earth and its kindred earths in the material universe. How are they created? How do they exist? We have already seen that all human beings derive life from the One Source of Life; and this life consists of Love and Wisdom, which are constantly flowing forth, and so creating. Let us pursue the progress of this life-giving influence. Having constituted the life of the heavens, and the life of men on earth, it still goes on and constitutes the earth itself. The Divine Love and Wisdom, on their way to the earth, through the minds of living and conscious beings, become in them affections and thoughts; but when they flow beyond them, and so beyond the realms of consciousness, they then become Heat and Light. These are the primary elements of material creation, as Love and Wisdom are of spiritual existence. The sun is as the shadow of the Almighty in no merely poetical sense; it is His image, because it is the first and nearest material

form which He assumes in His descent to this outer world. His Love and His Wisdom perpetually well forth in the form of heat and light; and that form they assume as the medium or instrument whereby He constantly creates and preserves the worlds of nature. But this is not all. As in man, everywhere, there is a will and an understanding, in which reside the love and truth which are the heat and light of his soul, and this love and truth become in his mind all the infinitely varied forms of affection and of thought of which he is capable; so, too, through all these various forms the influent life passes and flows forth, and represents them in the infinitely varied material forms which it assumes and so causes to exist; and all of these taken together constitute the earth on which man dwells. Thus it is that this earth is his mirror, his exact exponent and representative; thus it is that it becomes precisely adapted to his wants and his use, and thus it becomes his home. First, and nearest to man, is the animal kingdom; and, it consists of beings who live because they are the representatives of his affections and his thoughts. On the other hand, no affection or thought is without its adequate representative, for in that kingdom we find the innocent and useful creatures whom we gather about our homes, the beautiful birds whose songs of joy are hymns of praise to the giver of their happiness, and insects, that

breaking forth from the graves they spin, spreading their radiant wings and fluttering with delight from flower to flower as if they were but winged blossoms, image the resurrection of the soul;—and not that only, but the resurrection of our thoughts, that feeding for a while on grosser knowledge, and then, it may be, resting in silence and in darkness, at length break forth, beautiful, and winged, and free, and soar towards heaven, in the light of unclouded day. And with these representatives of what is good and true, are mingled, as in the minds of men, the fierce tiger, the cunning fox, the ravening wolf, the crawling and venomous serpent, and the foul and stinging insect; all of which would rend away the veil that covers man's heart, if he did not love that veil, and cling to it with all his strength.

Below animal life is the vegetable kingdom; and this too represents, in its beauty and in its deformity, in its fruits and in its poisons, and in the very laws of its growth by which seed and plant, leaf, blossom, and fruit succeed each other, all the varied elements of human life. Human affection and thought are imaged here, in the bud which conceals and guards its treasure, in the green leaf, in the blossom which light has painted, and in the ripened fruit which closes the circle and contains the seed that is ready to begin it anew. The time will come when all these things

will speak. Boundless the instruction they will give, happy the ear and the heart that open to receive it.

Below the vegetable forms, lies the mineral kingdom, or rather the whole of unorganized matter, including the airs and the waters, as well as the solid earth. Here we reach the last and lowest limit; and on this plane also are similar analogies.

Perhaps this doctrine, of the descent of Life, may be illustrated by a different example. Thus, let us begin by the endeavor to conceive of God, not merely as loving, but as Infinite Love itself; to consider Love as being itself the very divine essence and substance. This may be difficult; for in the present universal habit of sensuous thought, we can easily conceive of *loving*, but not of Love as a substance. But we may as well deny that fire is a substance, because we know it only as flaming, or burning, or melting. If we succeed in believing that Love is a spiritual substance and not merely a quality, and if we comprehend that this in its origin and infinity is a divine substance, then let us consider this, first, as manifesting itself in God, in His infinite love for all his children, and as being that which makes Him a Universal Father. From Him this paternal love comes into the will of man, and finds that an organized spiritual form, made for the very purpose of becoming a recipient of divine love. Being in man, it there manifests itself as his



paternal affection, without which the earth would soon cease to be inhabited. But it goes lower down. It enters into all animals; in the timid bird it manifests itself as the tender love, which gathers its young under its wings, and labors earnestly to feed them, and makes the fearful creature fierce against all danger and willing to die to save its unfledged brood. But it goes down yet lower. It enters into the vegetable kingdom, and there manifests itself in the constant effort of the plant or tree to nourish and perfect its seed, and so perpetuate itself in its productions. Still lower in the world of matter, it produces those efforts at crystallization and arrangement and growth, which science has just begun to lay hold of. One—everywhere—in all the various forms of being which it fills, it manifests itself everywhere, by an effort to the same end, which varies in its appearance and effect, not only in the classes of being but in every individual being, according to the form, organization, and quality of that being. And this may be regarded as one simple illustration of a universal law. For every affection or desire in man or animal, and every effort, tendency, or activity in the material world, exists primarily in the one Source of being, and passes through all the stages of existence, to the ultimates of being; and is in each being manifested as that which it becomes from the influence of the form by which it is received.

This lower world may indeed be regarded as a world of effects, of which the causes are in the higher world; and as the causes manifest themselves in these effects, so the effects do therefore correspond to and represent and signify these causes of their being. Hence, all that we see around us of dead matter, lives and speaks if we will hear. Earth is but an opened book; her mountains and valleys; deserts gemmed with islands of refreshment wherever springs break through the sand; fields and rocks and waters; the great sea and "the sky spread like an ocean hung on high;" all these are significant and instructive, if we will let them be so. Poetry has always known this. To her the beauty of nature has always been only the transparent covering of its inward life, and it has always been her delightful office to make that beauty eloquent. But science, the truest and highest science, will, in coming ages, invest with her own firmness and consistency truths that do indeed rest upon immutable and universal laws, although hitherto seen only by the poet. Seen indeed by him only in fitful glances, like the gleams which for a moment pierce a broad, cold cloud that darkens the whole heaven; and because so seen only, untaught reason, in the blindness of its pride, calls them mere beautiful imaginations, even while they stir and teach the heart with the power of living truth.

By far the most momentous inference from these views of the Laws of Existence, is that which relates to the Bible,—the Word of God. For our Father in heaven, besides creating all things and beings through His Truth, reveals that truth to all in the form of doctrine, that it may be a perpetual light to their steps. This revelation is made to all, but in various ways; to those in the highest heavens, to all other angels, and to men on earth. But the truth is ever the same. It is His own truth, and therefore ever the same, always and to all. Yet they who are in one state of existence need very different instruction from that which is required by others who are in a very different state. How is this difference effected; how is the adaptation of divine truth to all the states and exigencies of angels and of men, produced? Chiefly by means of the law of correspondence. For the same Word which is radiant with the manifestation of divine truth to the angels, and always teaches them the way of their own blessed life, descends to earth to lead man to heaven. Here it was revealed *through men to men*, and *thus* was made to assume a natural appearance. It narrates external historical facts, real or supposed, and refers to objects of sense, and commands things of outward observance, all of which exactly correspond to, and therefore exactly represent and signify the higher

truths which the same Word teaches to the angels. It is thus that the natural, literal sense of the Word was formed ; it is thus that it contains within it spiritual and heavenly senses ; thus is the literal sense made holy by the divinity within ; thus is this sense exactly adapted to lead men along the paths of goodness and truth, to that state wherein they need and are willing to receive and able to obey the higher senses which lie within the literal ; and it is thus that these higher senses may be brought within the apprehension of men who are willing to learn and love them.

These internal senses are now revealed ; for now the Son of Man has, as he promised, "come in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The divine truth by which the heavens are created and which fills them, is HEAVEN, and its clouds are the literal and natural senses which are interposed that the unprepared eye may not be blasted with excess of light. The Son of Man now comes, *in these clouds*, for he now reveals the truths concerning Himself, His laws, and His providence, which are contained within the literal sense. He comes with the POWER of divine truth to build up a New Church, a new Earth, a new condition of Humanity. And with great GLORY, for the sum and substance of all that the spiritual senses teach, is, that every thing good and

true comes from Him alone, and to Him alone they give the glory.

Hitherto much of the Bible has been a sealed book ; and but a small portion of the human race has had access to it, for most of the nations were supplied with the instruction they needed from other sources. Far-descended traditions, forms of worship and ritual, and books of religious doctrine, have in various ways furnished the heathen with instructions which guided to heaven all who were willing to be led thither. But the Bible, illustrated and glorified by the revelation of its concealed treasures, will now go forth conquering and to conquer. To every nation and in every tongue will it go in the bright future on which the light of hope and promise now rests, and to all it will carry blessing and salvation. The remarkable efforts which have been made within the few years since the New Church was established upon earth, to spread the Scriptures, at once indicate and assist the new influences from heaven which are preparing for the children of men, a new earth.

It is impossible to give a just impression of what is meant by the internal senses of Scripture, except by examples ; and it is impossible to give them in sufficient number and with sufficient fulness to effect this purpose within a brief space. It can only be said that the laws of correspondence are exact and definite ;

they constitute a science of great precision and certainty. Swedenborg devotes about twenty volumes to the explanation of three books only of the Scriptures, and professes to do little more than open the way to their meaning. The inner truths of the Word are indeed infinite; and through revolving eternities their successive development constantly gives new instruction and new light to those who consent to receive the gift.

Another interesting result from these laws of existence is that which explains the spirit-world. The life which, flowing through angels into men, and through men into nature, constitutes our world, flows also out from angels all around them, and constitutes their world. For they have their world, real, varied, beautiful, and formed to contribute to their happiness as ours; or rather far more so, because they are far more capable of happiness. As it exists in the same way in which our world exists, springing from the same causes and governed by similar laws, it is like our own. Milton was more than a poet, or rather he was truly a poet, when he says,

Though what if earth  
Be but the shadow of heaven and things therein,  
Each to the other like, more than on earth is thought!

And Wordsworth, true to the same poetic instinct, has

the same idea in his Laodamia. He speaks of the spirit-world as composed

Of all that is most beauteous, imaged there  
In happier beauty; more pellucid streams;  
An ampler ether, a diviner air,  
And fields invested with purpureal gleams;  
Climes which the sun that sheds the brightest day  
Earth knows, is all unworthy to survey.

But though these worlds are like, they also differ; and there are two or three points of difference which should be noticed. One is, that here, the living energies that give form to nature, are ultimated or vested in material substance, which is comparatively hard and gross. But there, life flows forth into spiritual substance, which is yielding, and more perfectly obeys the life that creates it. Moreover, there, angels are together; for the societies of heaven are discriminated and arranged with the greatest precision and order. Hence the world about them is not mingled, discordant, and conflicting, like this. Life is there without decay; beauty, and no worm to gnaw its bud; light and warmth, and all lovely and innocent creatures breathing the bright, soft air; and a vegetable kingdom but faintly imaged upon earth by those plants which have at once and in full perfection leaf and fruit and flower. If the thought occurs that we should miss

the sublimity of the frozen mountain-top, the storm-cloud and fierce lightning, and winter's wide expanse of unstained snow, let us consider whether lessons of equal sublimity and emotions of yet greater depth may not be given, when all the elements of natural beauty are evolved in infinite variety and a perfection unimagined now. Moreover, because this spiritual substance yields readily to the plastic power which fills it, and is nearer in its own nature to the soul, it reflects the soul and all that is within it more constantly and more perfectly. Here, this correspondence is general; the earth presenting in its various forms an image of human nature. There, this correspondence is particular; adapted to the societies of angels; and every angel has about him a home, and all natural forms, which perfectly represent himself. He sees there his own affections, his own thoughts, in form and in activity; they grow as he grows; they change as he changes; they are always *himself* in outward representation. Into this spirit-world man enters at death. While he remained in this lower world his spiritual body was within his natural body, giving it life and power and sense. It was always his spiritual eye which saw, his spiritual ear which heard, his spiritual senses which took cognizance of all things about him. But while he lived in the material body, it was only through the material organs of that body, that the eye



of his spiritual body could see and its ear could hear ; and for that purpose these material organs were exquisitely fitted to the spiritual organs which they served as instruments. But when these material organs or coverings fell off, the spiritual eye, the true and living eye, does not lose the power of seeing. It loses the power of seeing the material things for which it once possessed a material organ, but it acquires the power of seeing the spiritual substances and forms which this material organ had veiled. So it is with all the senses, and with all the organs of the body. The man rises from that portion of earth which his soul once vivified ; rises with the spiritual body he always had, and rises in full possession of all his senses and faculties, into a world of spiritual substances, of which his spiritual senses and organs now take cognizance in the same manner as the material organs here perceive material things. In a word, Death is Birth, and then man rises a man as before, but in a new world : yet, with all his organs, limbs, senses, faculties ; and into a world like in its appearances, and analogous in its uses, to the world he has left.

Besides the *mediate* influx from God, which I have attempted to consider, every being receives constantly an *immediate* influx. And it is rather to this influx that creation should be ascribed ; for it is this which calls every thing and being into existence, and renders

it capable of receiving the *mediate* influx, of which I have spoken. Perhaps it is enough to say upon this topic now, that whatever exists, receives its life in a twofold way. One, and the first, directly from God, the source of Life, and this gives to it being and existence. The other comes from God through all the intermediate planes or degrees of being; and is thus adapted to the state of every one, so as to supply him with life, while it is also in the constant endeavor to improve and elevate that state. I have spoken of this, rather because so essential a truth should not be omitted in a view of the laws of Life, than in the hope that the brief statement I have space for, in this Essay, can render it intelligible.

Thus far I have spoken of the life-influences of the Divine, in their descent, in their progress from within, outward. But they return to their infinite Source. Always life, they stop nowhere. Thus, when they have reached and created this lower, material world, they manifest themselves in this by a constant effort to reassume an upward flight; and they begin to accomplish this by providing sustenance and support for the vegetable kingdom. Earths, stones, and waters, always acted upon by the air and the imponderable fluids, are always endeavoring to become more and more adapted to sustain vegetable life, and to enter into vegetable life, and so ascend in the scale of being. This endeavor

may seem to be arrested where desolation reigns, and an inhospitable climate is at war with life, but still the work on the whole earth is always going on. Thus the vegetable world, which lives by the descent of the principles of life, is nourished and preserved by the same principles in their returning ascent; and in the vegetable kingdom they are again active in making its whole organization subserve the purpose of giving sustenance to the animal world which lies next above the vegetable creation. Then this whole lower world, all the existences below man, are filled and animated by the constant effort to provide for him a fitting dwelling-place, and food and raiment and shelter. In the mind of man, the principles of life have a form less removed from their divine Original; they become again, what they were in their descent to him, Love and Wisdom;—they are in him, the wisdom which looks up to God, to find in Him the only source of life and blessing, and the love which leads that wisdom upwards, the love of God, which now, as the conscious and voluntary love of human beings, returns to Him from whom it descended.

Nor is this all. Upon the earth the heavens rest; from it they are supplied, for none are *there* who were not *here* or on some other earth. The character is formed in this life which fits for heaven. Conscious of their blessedness, the angels desire more than aught

else to extend that blessedness; to enlarge the heavens; to make their inhabitants more numerous and their home more perfect. And the joy that is in heaven over every sinner that repenteth, over every one who allows himself to be led thither, gives a constant direction to angelic endeavor, and a constant happiness to angelic life.

To state the preceding views in a more condensed form, it may be said, that, —

The various classes of being exist on different planes or degrees, which are measured and determined by their distance from Him who is the origin of being.

The existences upon every plane but the highest having others higher than themselves, and upon every plane but the lowest having others lower than themselves, are all so created and formed by the efflux of life from the Highest, (which passing through and giving birth and form to all, impresses itself upon all,) that they all correspond together; the higher everywhere repeating itself in the lower, and there accommodating itself in form, use, and manifestation to a lower and remoter life.

Every order or degree of beings is the medium through which life and existence flow to those below; and in every order or degree of being, there is a constant tendency upwards; a constant endeavor to pro-

vide support, sustenance, exercise, and happiness for those above.

It is this system of existence which ancient mythology represented by the chain, that, fastened to the throne of God, fell in perpetual folds, embraced the earth, encircled within one or other of its golden links every created thing, and then returned to Him from whom it descended. Or, to refer to another and more appropriate symbol, the laws of Existence, thus understood, realize the ladder of the Patriarch's dream. It rests upon the earth and its top is in the heavens; and upon every step of its infinite length, the angels of God are descending and ascending forever and ever.

## PROVIDENCE.

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It was the purpose of the preceding pages to exhibit the laws of life, as they are manifested in the creation and support of all that exists. Closely connected with this subject, is one of yet deeper interest. What are the laws of human improvement? What are the means by which the progress of man towards heaven and towards God, is made possible? These questions I will now attempt to answer. And again we must go far back towards the source of existence. Indeed, the great Problem of Life presents three distinct aspects. It calls upon us to know whence we derive life; and how it is that the life we are conscious of is so imperfect and impure; and how such a life as this may be cleansed, enlarged, and elevated.

Whence do we derive life? We have already said from God, who is life itself and the only Source of Life. Nor can it be necessary to reassert this; for

all who profess any religion acknowledge it to be, in some sense, true. Still it is a truth obscured by prevailing falsehood; so obscured and dimmed, that it would be extinguished, if it were possible for any depth or darkness of the clouds to blot out the sun. There is especially one falsity shrouding this truth in these days in almost all minds. It tells us that life *was* given to our first parents, and is given only by transmission or inheritance to their children; or if it do not remove the work of creation so far backwards, it teaches that when a living soul was breathed into each man, the gift of immortality to him was entire, and the work of creation completed, and could neither be exhausted nor repeated. But there are so many ways in which this falsehood may be exposed, that escape from it cannot be difficult. It ascribes to the Eternal Present of divine power, our Past and Future. It elevates Time, as the nations strove to build their tower in the plains of Shinar, until it pierces the heavens; and utter confusion of tongue and thought is the result. It brings down God to man only by a process of degradation; only by imparting to Him our imperfections. We construct a clock or other machinery; and admire our own skill, in proportion as the work of our hands goes on the surer and the longer without our touch and presence. And so we think God made man and built the world. But we forget that our

clock goes on, only because we leave it to the constant operation of the constant activities of nature. For not even here, on this lower plane of existence, is there any thing which encourages us to believe that any effect can continue after the cause has ceased to operate.

God is the one Cause. He is the cause of all causes. Exclude this truth from the idea of God, and nothing is left. He is also a continual, a constant cause. There is a universal tendency which leads us to limit Him as we are limited, and, reversing the truth, create God in man's image; but if we reflect upon the divine nature with any endeavor to resist this tendency, we shall perceive that it must be His constant operation which not only sustains, but is always imparting life, and as an always-present act, causes all that is, to be. When this truth is clearly seen by us, we have gained much; for it is a truth of great power. It touches the dead bones which we call the laws of nature, and they live. It comes with consolation and with hope, for it comes to tell us that God is very near, and always Himself present; and that he has not delivered us over to lower agencies or lifeless laws, as his vicegerents.

When this truth becomes our own, and we are able to acknowledge sincerely that life is the constant gift of God, another question presents itself. What is the life He gives? There can be but one answer to



this ; — the life he gives is His own life ; and it is and must be from Himself. In a former Essay I have endeavored to illustrate this truth. But we cannot rest in this truth, because it leads directly to a question of great difficulty. How can the life of God become *that* which our life *is* ; so imperfect, so impure, so full of all that demands change and improvement ; so directly and thoroughly opposed to the will of God himself.

To this question we have already given one answer. We have endeavored to show how the Divine Life comes to us through intermediate natures, of which the series constantly approaches us, and terminates in those who are like ourselves. This answer, so far as it is intelligible and understood, may explain the fact, that Life, although pure in its source, becomes in us such as we are. But why are we permitted to become such ? This question too is answered, when we understand that freedom, free-agency, is given to man and constantly preserved, as the essential condition of his happiness. For if we understand this, it is easily seen that freedom to be good, must also be freedom to be evil, or else it is not freedom. For liberty of choice, and free-agency, imply of necessity the capacity and ability to abuse and pervert them ; and this capacity being exercised, has made man what he is.

These considerations may help us to comprehend

how man acquires his actual state and character, and is still supplied with life from its only Source, which life is modified into an adaptation to his quality ; and let us now look at the means by which he may rise into another character and state. If we can form any just idea upon these two subjects, we may hope to discern something of the reason why man has been permitted to fall into his present condition, and something of the mercy which constantly keeps open a way by which he may escape from it.

I would repeat, to prevent misconception, that I can now attempt to give only the most general view of a subject, so extensive and so difficult.

Let us begin then by inquiring, in what form do the questions of the problem we attempt to solve, present themselves to the mind. Perhaps it may be thus. If we know that men live by means of an influx, that, coming from pure and perfect Life, becomes adapted to them, by passing through intermediate beings, and thus by gradual approach becoming such as they are, the difficulty then arises how can men grow better? And when we know, on the other hand, that man lives *also* by an influx directly into the inmost of his soul, from Life itself, from Divine Life, the question then occurs, how is it that man is so impure, so imperfect, so full of affections which are opposite to divine affections? The answer to both

of these questions is one. For that answer is, that this influx through media, and this other direct influx, are both from one Source, both for one end; and must coöperate to produce that end. As we assist this coöperation, we advance our own regeneration; and as we understand this coöperation, so we shall understand what regeneration is, and how it is effected.

Before this can be understood, some idea must be formed of the three degrees of life which are within every one. The internal and the external man are not the soul and the body. They are rather two natures, if we may so speak; almost two beings. Nor can this be illustrated better than by appealing to every one's experience. Who has not known what it is to be impelled in one direction by vehement desires, while at the same time, other affections above and within these restrain and hold us back with a firm hand, and will not let us go? This is not a mere comparison of arguments, or balancing the expediency of one course against that of another. That exists by itself. But beside it all, there is in every one's experience that which, if he permits it, may give him a consciousness, that he has *within* him truths, affections, principles, other and higher than those of his external life. The common phrase which invites the erring or the tempted to look within, and ask of conscience what is right, is

but one expression of a universal truth. The external of man is that part of his nature which is nearest his conduct, his outward life ; on that plane are his passions, his most apparent motives, his opinions, and the plans and purposes which fluctuate with circumstances ; by this he comes in contact with the world without ; and these are the thoughts and affections which are the first effects of sensation, or which lie just within the senses. The internal of man is something more. There are his principles of action ; there, whatever of reason he may have ; there, the great and permanent ends, — whatever may be their quality, — which determine and constitute his real character. Within this again is his *inmost* ; and in the inmost of every man is Life directly from God ; not so assimilated to him that he can be conscious of it ; not within his reach that he may pervert it ; and therefore not within either his knowledge or his power.

The life and love which flow into man through living media, conform to his state, so as to fill him as he is, and whatever he may be, with life. These media are good and evil ; the evil perpetually endeavoring to make him like themselves ; the good ever striving to improve and elevate him ; and both together filling all his life, and so tempered by each other, as to leave him in freedom. While this is so, the life which flows in directly from God, and is concealed within, per-

petually seeks and endeavors to bring the states of conscious and voluntary life into a free conformity with itself. In doing this, it constantly uses and works through and with the efforts of those who are the media of life to the external. In this way are supplied and vivified the constant means of human improvement and regeneration.

Between these two, — life in the inmost of the heart and external life, — there is in the beginning no conformity; there is an active opposition. This opposition produces conflict, a sense of internal warfare, a want of peace, unless the divine and inmost life ceases its endeavor to bring the external life into conformity with itself, because the opposition to that endeavor is confirmed and absolute; and then there is the peace of the unhappy and the lost. It is not meant that the good, or they who are becoming good, have no peace, no rest. Their prevailing state is one of warfare. The language of the Bible harmonizes with all human experience, in declaring that all progress implies effort, resistance, combat; but there are intervals of peace, — intervals, when the battle of that day is won, and the wearied soldier rests and rejoices; intervals, when the climbing pilgrim has reached a mountain-top, and while he breathes the sweet freshness of its air, he looks back upon his nights of darkness and his days of toil, and around upon a world now glowing with beauty

because the love which fills it is, for that hour, unveiled,—and upward to a sky, from which the clouds have melted or else give back the sunshine in golden light; and forward, to the distant and loftier summits, where peace has a more abiding home. These are intervals of refreshing rest and calm and quiet gladness. They spring from the cessation of conflict between the life that lies latent in the inmost soul and that which animates the external character. This external life is not yet wholly obedient, wholly conformed to the life within; but for a while it is quiescent,—for a while it yields so far as to give rest to the soul, and a foretaste, of the joy, the measure of which will be full when the work is done. And these states of peace give strength for further endeavors, further conflicts. They come again before the mind when hope is fainting, and breathe into her the breath of life: they come to rebuke the fear that might else be despair; to invigorate the efforts which begin to fail, to strengthen the resolution when it wavers. They come to remind us that in the treasury of Divine Love there is enough to compensate for all that we can do, and all that we can suffer.

If we know that regeneration is produced by the endeavor of the life within to bring into conformity with itself the life of the external mind, the next truth necessary to the comprehension of this subject is, that

this is done, and can be done, only through the conscious and voluntary act and effort of the man himself. It is not meant that there is no progress unless there be a knowledge of these truths and principles, and an endeavor after improvement based upon them. Far from it. But it is meant that there is no progress unless where there is a conscious and voluntary endeavor to conform to the will of God. And this is, in effect, the same thing. In the laws of God, revealed by Him to various nations and in different ways, but always as rules of life, God reveals Himself. These laws, in their purity, express the principles of His own nature and life. They come down into language, and are variously modified to meet the exigencies and suit the disposition of the time and people to whom they are given; and thus they are often mingled with much that is derived from the state of those to whom they are addressed, because it is thus that these laws may be made intelligible, accessible, practicable. But within them all, as that which gives them life and power and makes them good, is the truth which describes the very life of God himself; and therefore this truth is an expression in words, of the life which, by direct influx from Him, fills the inmosts of all men. Thus these laws are, in their essence, one with the inmost life of man. And they who endeavor to obey them and to love them, to conform to them in conduct and affection,

do thus in fact endeavor to bring their external and conscious life into conformity and oneness with the life within; and these laws are given for this very purpose. The disposition to obey them comes from this inward life; and the ability to obey them is from the same source. While this disposition and ability are always given, but without controlling the man's own will and so doing violence to his freedom, and while they are given just so far as may be done without impairing freedom, the influence from the spiritual world, which gives us conscious thoughts and affections, is always so modified as to place the man in freedom to turn towards or from the laws of genuine life. It is so modified, that whosoever is willing to receive into his will the disposition to obey those laws, and is also willing to exert his ability to obey them, finds in the life which forms his conscious being, no obstruction which he may not overcome. It is not said that he will find *no* obstruction. Evil spirits are there, for that part of his character which is evil must also be filled and vivified, and they and their seductive promptings must be resisted and overcome; sometimes with labor and pain; but always with success, if the effort be earnest and sincere, because their injurious influence is so qualified, so met and counteracted, as to leave man in freedom.

The law on this subject may be stated, generally,



thus. Man lives by influx of life from the Source of life into the inmost of his being. He also lives by influx from the same source through such media as modify that life into fitness and conformity with himself. Angels and good spirits are in part these media. Their efforts are constant to make him better than he is; and the life which flows to him directly from the Lord, constantly endeavors to make these efforts successful, and bring the outward conduct into oneness with the purer life within, so far as this may be done without violence and in freedom. The man may *compel himself*; and is then most free, when he asserts the sovereignty of truth and of religion, and compels his external life to obedience.

This statement may seem strange and paradoxical in many respects; but chiefly in this. It may suggest the idea that Divine Providence, in operating thus, employs a circuitous and complicated mode of effecting objects, which might be reached more directly and more perfectly by the mere will of Omnipotence; and in so believing, we may seem to ascribe to Him infirmity and lack of power.

We give one answer to this objection, when we refer to the whole course of existence, to all the varied life of the universe. We have everywhere a proof that God acts by means; we have no single instance of other action. All things that exist exert an influence

of some kind, greater or less, nearer or more remote, upon all other things; and the various forms of being which constitute the universe, are preserved from isolation and uselessness, by this mutual and perfectly universal interdependence. But while the objection may be silenced by this answer, it is explained only when we remember that this very law of interdependence constitutes the perfection of every thing and the happiness of whatever can be happy. For, by means of it, while Providence gives to each one and does for each one what he needs, another is made the medium of the gift, and so is in his own use and happiness. Think but for a moment of depriving any being we may place before the mind, of all influence upon others, all effect whatever upon man or society, by example or otherwise; and we see at once that we take from that being all life, all occupation, all wherein and whereby he now lives and enjoys. If we do not kill him outright, we bury him alive. So far therefore as the objection to the manner of regeneration we have attempted to describe rests upon the apparent complexity of the means, so far it should be answered by the truth, that this complexity doubles the blessing, — making it bless him on whom it falls, and them through whom it descends; and this law is in the truest analogy with all the laws of the universe.

But a part of this objection rests upon another

ground; upon the difficulty of believing that perfect Love accomplishes its purpose of blessing, only through the toil and suffering of those on whom the blessing rests. That it is so, all experience and observation prove; for not religion only, but all philosophy teaches, that for all great good a great price must be paid. To explain this, however, requires another consideration; and that consideration touches the need and use of individual freedom.

Let us remember what it is to be regenerate. It is, to love, consciously and freely, the will of God. And how can this be if we have no freedom, or if this freedom be violated? We can undoubtedly conceive of Omnipotence as changing, at once and by irresistible will, the whole conduct and motives of a man; but if we attempt to combine with this, the thought that the man remains always through this process and at its close a free man, we shall find ourselves employed in reconciling contradictions. We are bringing together ideas which are mutually destructive. To lead one by persuasive means, which, in their constant gentleness use no force, impairs no freedom. But compulsion and inevitable necessity cannot make any person *choose* one of many things; they may make him *take, accept*, what they will; but no choice is there, for there is no freedom; and because there is no choice and no freedom, there is no willing reception into the heart, there

is no love, no happiness, no heaven. Here then is the truth which explains the dealings of God with man, for it is the truth which those dealings regard. Heaven is love, is happiness, is freedom, for these are inseparably connected. We might almost say that the problem which every man's regeneration presents to the Divine Providence, is the leading him from one class of affections into others which directly oppose the first, without violating his freedom at any single step, or in the final result; and I suppose this problem to be solved, this work to be done, in the manner and by the means of which I have attempted, in the preceding pages, to give a very general idea.

If we have a clear perception of these truths, and hold them constantly connected, we have a key to the mystery of human life. We may apply this key to the occurrences of our own life, and understand the origin, the operation, and the use of many events, perhaps of many sufferings, which were otherwise shrouded in more than midnight blackness. Let me re-state these truths or propositions, or principles, in the simplest form in which I am able to convey them.

The first is this. Every man lives by influx from the Lord, who is Life itself. This influx of life reaches him in two ways; in one way through intermediate beings, the last of the series approaching nearest to himself; and this influx being modified by

this transmission, fills his external character, his conscious thoughts and affections, with a life at once in correspondence with his will and disposition, whatever they may be, and yet constantly endeavoring to elevate that will. An influx of life also reaches man directly from God; and this is pure unmingled Divine life. It goes into the inmosts of his soul, and remains there unseen, unknown, except in its influence; and this influence it constantly exerts in the endeavor to bring the outward, voluntary, conscious character into conformity with itself.

The second of these truths or principles is this. The inmost life, in its endeavor to bring the outward life into oneness with itself, never acts with violence. It always regards man's freedom, his choice, his will; and this it seeks never to break and crush, but to bend and lead, and gradually renew the character. It would make the man love what he has hated; and this it would do in such wise that he may do it as of himself, and retain his liberty and indulge his affections, even in the work of changing his affections.

Take with us these two truths, and they reveal the secret mercy which leads man through sorrow and through temptation, even to the very Source of mercy.

Many are the enigmas which may thus be solved. The success, prosperity, and happiness of the wicked often stand in mournful contrast with the sorrows and

painful labors of those who would be good. The world often gives to the one its honor, power, and homage; and to the other, poverty, depression, and contempt. How easily are these things now explained! God knows — He alone knows — what manner of man each one is. He knows whether ill success and pain and sorrow will check self-love, and turn the thoughts from earth to heaven, and vivify religious wishes, and bring forth true humility; and if this will be the effect of sorrow and disappointment, they are permitted. But where they would only exasperate, and anger and despair would mingle in the heart like the fire and hail which ran together along the ground of Egypt, — then success and prosperity are given instead. For God does not willingly afflict, and chastens them only whom chastisement may improve. Often, too, it happens that they who cannot be made with their own coöperating consent good, may yet be restrained from deeper evil by affliction and various suffering; and then it comes to them from the same mercy which gladly drops the oil of gladness upon all who in their happiness remember Him, and can therefore be led to heaven by the paths of peace. Yet none may hope that all their ways will be pleasantness, and all their paths peace. Our natural proneness to love self and the world more than we love God and His will, being universal, it may be said that none can be prepared for heaven without

passing through the dark valleys where affliction dwells.

Nothing of this is or can be at any moment, to any person, accidental. The Providence of God never remits its care, never abates its love, never changes its purpose, and its wisdom never fails. Because it is Infinite it fills and guides alike the least and greatest things, and so disposes all as to promote His constant purpose. The spirit of God is often compared in the Word to the wind which bloweth where it listeth, and we know not whence it cometh nor whither it goeth. Yet who can doubt, that the wind, alike in its sport and in its fury, whether it brings refreshment or destruction, moves in obedience to the physical laws which God impresses upon nature. If the storm lashes the ocean into fury or devastates the earth, we are willing to listen as to the voice of God, and we look with awe upon the putting forth of his power. And yet how blind are we not to know, how dull not to remember, that the soft wind of summer, answering with its sweet song to the bird and the insect and all the pleasant sounds of nature, and bearing away upon its gentle breath the perfume of the blossoms,—is equally and wholly His instrument, His servant. So it is with the wind of His spirit. No hair of our heads, no sparrow falls to the ground without His cognizance and permission — *and for His purpose.*

If we apply the principles we have been considering to those dispensations of Providence by which churches have been established, we may perhaps explain the fact, that they have come successively, and have brought with them but partial disclosures of the Divine Truth. One would think that if Truth were a good thing, it would be given to man at once, in full and overflowing measure. So it might be given. If it were the will of God, all His creation would utter forth His Wisdom audibly, irresistibly. The sighing or the stormy wind, the singing bird, and all the myriad voices of nature, might easily be made to declare His laws. The burning lights of the sky would record them in fire, and every leaf, tossed by the breath of autumn to man's feet, would bring its written lesson. But there is nothing of all this. The means which God has chosen for His revelations are very different; and the measure of His revelation to every succeeding church seems carefully adjusted by some law to some end. We have now the law and the end disclosed to us; for we may know now that truth is given only in such form and measure as may best lead man *in freedom*, to submit his external and conscious life to the life within and to the laws of that life. More than this is not given, because it would do violence and thus prevent or retard a real progress. The truth given in successive dispensations advances in quantity and in clearness,



for the very reason that every dispensation which produces its intended effect upon the human race, thereby makes it possible for more and brighter truth to be given safely. As this is the law of Divine Providence to ages and to races, so it is to individuals. The circumstances which surround every person are so governed, and opportunities are so closed or opened, that the very truth most useful to him is placed within his reach; and every truth received, obeyed, and loved, opens the way for more. Nor is there in this more than in any of God's laws, a motive to inaction or an excuse for it. Whatever is given to man is given *through* man; and they who possess truth which others have not, cannot without wrong forget that they have it, *first* that they may obey it, and *next* that they may give it. And while they exert, temperately and reasonably, all the means which God has given them to diffuse the truth which He has given them, they may be sure to be blessed as the means of blessing in a greater or a less degree, and He will guard them from becoming the means of mischief.

The remark is often made, and sometimes in any thing but a religious mood, that it depends upon the accident of a man's birth whether he be a Christian, a Mahometan, or a Pagan. Undoubtedly this is true; excepting so much as is implied in the word "accident," for there is no such thing as accident. Every man

born into this world inherits the accumulated qualities and tendencies of a long line of ancestry. Under whatever dispensation these have been formed, to that they are adapted, and that again is adapted to them. Thus he who is born of Mahometan parents among a Mahometan people, for that very reason is born with germs and tendencies which can be improved most effectually by Mahometan truth. This is the general law; and to its power must be attributed a large part of the extreme difficulty with which what are called "conversions" are made in foreign lands, and national religions overthrown. It is, however, only a *general* law. It is subject to many exceptions and much qualification, and when well understood contains nothing to induce one to abate a jot of any wise endeavors to improve the religious state of other nations. But into these details we cannot now enter.

So, too, within a dispensation or a church, there are many varieties of faith and practice. There are, for instance, those who practise and inculcate asceticism. This belongs to all religions, although it differs in form and in intensity in different nations and ages; but everywhere are some devoted to the hardest, harshest self-denial, and sometimes self-torment. Something of this may be well for all. There are some whose natural love for the enjoyments of sense, of taste, of art, and of the world, is so strong that moderation is almost

impossible ; and when they are led to resist and suppress that love altogether, others who err in blaming them for seeking *that* path of safety, err equally in wishing that all the ways of life and of improvement should be deserted for that in which alone they themselves find comfort and security. That which is the best path for them, is not so for the whole world. There is no one which is best for the whole world. In our Father's house are many mansions, and to every mansion its own path leads.

Least of all should differences like these become the grounds of self-conceit, or, what is worse, of bigotry. Not only because Truth is not man's own ; not only because the mere possession of truth makes no man wise or good ; but because the possession of the highest truth is not of itself evidence of a higher state. This is well illustrated now by the relative condition of the Heathen and of Christians. We have Swedenborg's authority, together with all the proof which can be derived from exhibition of character, that at this moment there is among many Heathen nations more of purity, of benevolence and religion, more of what leads to heaven and constitutes heaven, than in most of the nations of Christendom. In general, it may be well for all to know and to remember, that the possession of exalted truth justifies no conclusion as to the actual moral state ; because it proves only that truth of that

order and degree is best adapted to effect the measure of moral and religious improvement of which that individual may be capable.

The law of human regeneration founded upon the constant endeavor of the life within, to bring into conformity with itself the life without, implies that all circumstances are so guided and controlled as to promote this end. Man is never made to sin; but he is permitted to sin, if he cannot be restrained without violating his freedom. Even here, however, the mercy of God faileth not; for no man is allowed to cast himself into an abyss so deep and dark as to extinguish the hope or the possibility of return. And this assurance offers comfort and strength to those who are bowed down, not with the sense of sorrow only, but with the far heavier burden of sin. Truth does not tell us that it is better for us to sin; it does not say to our evil propensities, be ye indulged that ye may become the means of good. For it is not good, but evil, and only the spirit of evil, which says, under any circumstances whatever, — Evil, be thou my Good. I mean that there is nothing in these truths, nothing in any truth, to comfort us while we sin, or give new strength to the voice of the Tempter. But if we turn away from our sins that we may live, if we repent and do the work of repentance, then we may remember, and then

we should remember, that we were not deserted of God, were not where He was not, even in the hour of darkness when we yielded and sinned. "If I make my bed in hell, behold thou art there." What is the law of Divine Providence in this respect? The passions and sinful propensities to which we yielded, could not have been stirred into activity without the influence of those who live forever in such delights. *They* are in hell; in bondage; and could not have assailed and attempted us but with His permission; and He would not have permitted it but for our possible good. If the question be asked, how can this be, the answer is, that every sinful propensity *resisted*, opens a way for the opposite good affection to enter and be received into the heart, and be loved and cherished there and made our own. Therefore those evil propensities are awakened which we may, if we will, resist, and only those. Again, every sin committed strengthens and roots the disposition to that sin. But if it be repented of, the work of repentance plucks the poison-plant out from the heart, and when that sin is hated, the opposite good is loved. If therefore we are conscious, not merely that we lament the external consequences of our fault, not merely that we fear its punishment in this world or another, not merely that our pride is sorely wounded and we shrink from the blow of dishonor—but that we hate the sin and the sinful thought that led to it,

then it becomes our duty to hope that one disposition, one propensity, one obstacle which stood between the life of God in us and our conscious, voluntary life, has been taken away. Such is the law of Divine Providence. There are, who pass through life with but few stains upon their innocence, few recollections to haunt the memory with a dark presence, few apparent reasons for beating the breast like the publican in the gospel, and uttering the cry, have mercy upon me, a sinner. Yet it is not always upon them that the highest blessing rests; it may not be they who can best understand and most deeply feel that Divine Love which uttered the words of mercy, — They to whom much is forgiven love much. We are all filled with the seeds and germs of all that is evil. It is these which constitute the chasm, the barrier between our inmost life and our outward life; and as more of these are drawn forth into consciousness, resisted and so put away, the more freely that life which comes directly from God may flow from within and animate our conscious will and thought.

For it is to be known and well considered, that it is not the effort of the life within to control, subdue, enslave the life without. But to fill it, liberate it, make it a willing instrument, endow it with new life and bless it with its own happiness. There are two things which constitute angelic life and its happiness; one is the

knowledge and perception that their whole life, their every thought, affection, faculty and power are from God, and are His. The other is, the consciousness that these things have become theirs; and that they live and work and are happy, *as* of themselves, though from Him. Hence it may be understood, that every one of our conscious thoughts and affections which becomes such that the inmost life is able to reach and fill it, becomes also a means by which the happiness of that life reaches us and comes into our possession and into our consciousness. It is the constant endeavor of that life to bring into conformity and correspondence with itself, all of those thoughts and affections, or as many of them as may be so regenerated; because in that proportion the freedom with which it fills our conscious life is increased and the blessings it bestows are multiplied.

Hence, too, it may be understood why regeneration makes us happy. The effect of it is, to make the Divine life our life; ours by voluntary adoption; ours in freedom; ours in willingness and love. This life is love, and therefore it is happiness. So far as we are in self-love, we nourish within us the central root from which springs everything of evil. We cannot always trace back to this origin all the evils we commit or of which we are conscious. Their disguises are many; they lead us away in many direc-

tions; but they all radiate from one common centre, and that centre is the love of self. And this love has its delights. Bad men, and bad spirits who were bad men, enjoy them. But these delights differ from the blessedness of genuine love precisely as that differs in its whole essence and effect from self-love. Only the enjoyments of this last,—impure, transient, disturbed, and grovelling,—they who are unregenerate can know; for the love which feels and confers a higher happiness has not yet penetrated to their conscious perceptions and their thoughts. This can be only so far as their hearts are purged from self-love and from pride, from sin and the propensity to sin; and therefore only so far can the life within, from its latent, inward, unconscious condition, come forth into free and manifested life, and be felt as the source of a truer, higher happiness, as happiness itself, as Heaven.

And there is another, a yet wider application which may be made of these truths. Do they not solve that which has been called the riddle of life from the days when the Sphinx was fabled to sit by the wayside, with a countenance full of charms, but armed below with weapons of destruction, propounding her questions to all who passed, and devouring all who failed to answer? So is Human life in all its ongoings; in its whole course of social or individual existence. Full



of charms and interests which absorb the whole care and the whole love of most men, and enwrap the heart as with a veil of clouds; but clasping with the embrace of death those who fail to recognize and pursue the true purpose of life. Who is there that is capable of one thought higher than the low level on which he walks, but has asked himself why indeed he lives? Is it only to learn this trade or art or profession, and perform this or that labor, and so get shelter, food, and raiment, and then pass away? It is for all these things, but for them because within them all lie the infinite purposes of the Almighty. This life is disciplinary and preparatory in no merely general sense. It is strictly so, always, in every particular to all. Every one may know, for the Word of God and all reason and religion are always ready to tell him, that his use or employment, however humble and poor and opposed to his taste and wishes, is given him, because it is precisely that which is best adapted to develop and exercise those affections, which may hereafter have the breadth of Heaven for their scope, the works of Heaven for their employment, and the happiness of Heaven for their effect. Vast is the difference in earthly positions and occupations in the eye of man. In the sight of God the only difference is in the use which is made of them, for there is no difference in the purpose for which they are given. They differ, as men differ, be-

cause to all they are exactly adapted. But they are alike in this ; they are always just those employments, by means of which, while man is heartily engaged in them from love to his fellow-men and a wish to love God and do his duty, his inmost life may be bending and leading the thoughts and affections which these employments excite, into conformity with itself, so that it may prepare them to be filled with the life of heaven. The degree in which this is effected depends upon the degree in which we do the very duty which lies before us, from benevolent and religious motives,—or, to use better words, from love to our neighbor and love to God.

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In no man can this work be perfected. In no man can the life which fills his inmost, become absolutely one with his external life. But this work was perfected in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The inmost of His life was not an influx from God ; it was Jehovah, Himself ; and His external life was the human nature born of Mary. That inmost Life, through temptations which were admitted to that human nature, and which were such as no mere man could endure, through sorrows such as no man could outlive, through combats passing all human strength, glorified that human nature

and made it one with the Divine, and made it itself Divine. This was the whole work; then was that completely done and fully consummated, which each one of us may do in our own degree and in our own way — must do or be lost. But because it was all done in Him and in His Life, therefore we are commanded to take up the cross and follow Him; and therefore we are permitted to hope that at every step of our progress He is working with us.

He drank the cup offered to His lips; He ascended to His Father and our Father. If we, too, drink, the bitterness of its taste will pass away, and in His path we also shall ascend; and our home will be near His home, and it will be eternal.

## CORRESPONDENCE.

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IN former pages I have spoken of the correspondence between the world of matter and the world of spirit; nor could I say aught of Life, or of Divine Providence, without recognizing this correspondence; because only through it and by it have spiritual causes operated to produce material creation. The same causes always operate in the same way to preserve and perpetuate creation. All the powers and activities of nature, all its laws, its substances, its forms, and changes, are at once the effect and the mirror of spiritual energies.

But the effect of this correspondence which first meets an inquirer into the doctrines of the New Jerusalem, is that which is manifested in the Word. He learns that this is written according to the laws of correspondence; that there is within the letter a spirit, within the body a soul. That the science of corre-

spondence, being now revealed, interprets anew the Word of God, and discloses the spiritual truths which lie within the literal; and he finds very soon, in the works of Swedenborg, in sermons, and other New Church compositions, passages of Scripture so explained. The exceeding beauty of many of these explanations delights the imagination. The profound moral significance thus given to many texts, which in the letter "profit nothing," touches every heart that has any religious tendency; the emotion of surprise and the charm of entire novelty make these explanations yet more attractive. An earnest desire to read in this way all the Scriptures is awakened; and as yet the inquirer knows no reason why he may not learn to interpret them by the science of correspondence, just as he has learnt or seen others learn to interpret them from their original languages. The attempt is made; but unexpected difficulties arise; it is not found easy, and seems indeed very difficult; and the disappointment produces not only a feeling of uncertainty as to what correspondences are, but perhaps a doubt whether they are any thing more than a mere ingenious fancy. If such a person happens to have some acquaintance with "Phrenology," he may think of the "organ of comparison," of which it is supposed to be the office and the delight to discern resemblances and analogies, and to construct parables and symbolic representations.

Much of this has always been done ; but more in those Eastern lands, where the Old Testament and much of the New were written, than elsewhere ; and he supposes the same faculty, existing in a high degree in Swedenborg, may have brought out many beautiful and striking results, without disclosing new principles or a new science.

We have known readers to labor awhile under these difficulties, from which they are gradually relieved as they begin to understand better the grounds, principles, and results of the science of correspondence. Some of the views and truths, which may serve to make these difficulties press less heavily and pass the sooner away, I propose to present, very briefly

In the first place, then, I must repeat that the Science of Correspondence rests upon and springs from the Laws of Existence. The problem of Being presents its most difficult question to the human mind in the inquiry *how* God created and creates, sustains and fills the world. The answer is, — from Himself, and in such wise that all things being linked together and to Him, are connected by a mutual interdependence, and by definite relations. The inmost of all things, is Love. And this in its various forms of affection, desire, and purpose, produces thought ; and thoughts clothe themselves in words. But the same power and

providence which, from its own Love, supplies men with Love, makes the outward world also. All the energies, tendencies, and activities of the outward, material world, are derived from the same Love, and are images and forms which bear its impress and reveal its nature and operation. And not the laws and energies of nature only, but the substances and forms of this outward world, — *all its material things*, — are again effects and images of the same Love, and of the Divine Wisdom which springs from the Divine Love as men's thoughts do from their affections. Because the Divine Love is infinite and inexhaustible, and because it is guided by an equal wisdom, it is able and disposed to come down even into the lowest things of nature, and form there what is needed for use; and accommodate itself in every stage of its descent, to all the subjects which it forms and fills. Being everywhere one and the same infinite thing, however variously modified, all these subjects image it, reflect it, reveal it. And hence and thus, God is All in all.

One consequence of this is, that the whole material world is representative and significant of the inner world of spirit, mind, and affection. And this not generally only, but particularly; not in a loose, poetical, imaginative sense, but strictly and most truly so, by its constitution and the very laws of its being.

Another consequence is, that truths which relate to

character, conduct, motive and life, *may* be imaged and represented by more external truths which relate to the things of the external world and have no apparent reference to duty ; and truths which in express terms prescribe laws of conduct of an external kind, may have within them other and higher laws of spiritual life. This is the way in which the Bible—the Word of God—is written. Not by the genius of man ; nor through a thorough knowledge of the laws of correspondence ; but by Divine Inspiration. Because written by Divine Inspiration, and for the purposes of Divine mercy, it is so written that its external truths are and forever will remain the *basis* of all religious or genuine improvement, while, at the same time, they contain a distinct class of higher internal truths. This is effected by the laws of correspondence, and it is in exact conformity with those laws. Hence, too, these internal truths are in no sense a substitute for, and still less are they to be regarded as in the attitude of opposition to the external truths.

A large part of the Word, especially of the Old Testament, contains, in its literal sense, very little which has any discernible relation to conduct and character ; and of this part it can only be said now, that treasures of truths which have this relation are here stored up within the spiritual sense. But the greater portion contains, in the literal sense, truths or facts



illustrative of truths, which are precisely those needed and best adapted to improve the conduct and external character.

It is not difficult to understand that one truth and one kind of truth will operate beneficially upon a person in one state of mind and in one condition, and another truth upon a person in another state and condition. It is in this adaptation of truths, by various means, that the mercy and wisdom of God are manifested. Hence the vast diversity of religions; and hence the variety in the instruction and amount of knowledge given to different individuals, in the same church or professing the same religion. This diversity depends upon differences of character, which, for the most part, are beyond our perception or comprehension; and, therefore, even if we have a general understanding of the principles which must govern and direct this adaptation, we cannot always clearly comprehend the application of these principles to particular cases. But the principal and most general means of this adaptation is the difference and mutual relation of the natural and spiritual senses of the Word. Nor can it be difficult to obtain some clear views of the ground of difference between the external and the internal truths of the Bible.

We must, in the first place, remember that the great purpose of the written Word, as of the incarnate

Word, is, "to call sinners to repentance." Therefore it addresses itself *first* to sinners; to those who indulge sinful propensities and feelings and have acquired sinful habits. It is perfectly obvious, that with persons as yet buried in the slough of sinfulness, motives of the most elevated and spiritual character have little or no power. Fear, and the hope of recompense, and caution and prudence are, *in them*, all that can be appealed to successfully. The external truths and commands of the Word make this appeal. They require the renouncing of sinful pleasures and the resisting of sinful propensities, under fearful penalties and with magnificent promises. If they prevail; if the command be obeyed; then the whole conduct is reformed; then the various propensities to sin are weakened by resistance; new states of mind and feeling grow up; new capacities of improvement by new means are developed; for the mind can comprehend and the heart can feel new motives. Then the time has come when these new motives can be presented by means of new truths; and the new truths, which may supply new motives, are the internal truths of the Word; and their relation to the external truths of the Word is such, that an obedience to the literal commands of Scripture is the precise and appropriate preparation for listening to its spiritual commands.

In fact, these commands may be called the same.

The literal truth of the word is the same with its spiritual truth; but it is this truth brought down into lower forms, in order that it may thereby be adapted to lower states of thought and affection, and elevate them; and as these are elevated, the truth rises also, and the faint light of morning brightens into day.

In considering the intellectual difficulties which oppose a thorough learning of the science of correspondence, its extent should be regarded. For the spiritual truth of the Word, in its own nature infinite, can be adequately expressed by correspondent natural truths, only because the correspondence between spiritual and natural things is universal. This lower world is but a world of effects, of which the higher and inner spiritual world is the world of causes. Every thing, every substance, every energy, every law of nature, is the effect of a spiritual cause to which it corresponds, and of which it is the expression and image. Hence the science of correspondence can never be fully known, until the whole spiritual world, and all the natural world, and all the laws of mind and matter are fully known. That is, it can never be fully known; because the condition of a healthy human mind, in this world and in the other, is one of eternal progress and improvement. More is continually learnt of the love and wisdom of God as manifested in creation, and therefore more is continually learnt of the science of corre-

spondence. But it follows, also, that all progress in the knowledge of this science assists all progress in other knowledge; and, on the other hand, if the leading principles of this science are rightly apprehended, all true knowledge promotes the better understanding of them, and of their use and application.

Besides the extent of this science, there are other sources of difficulty. One of them is this. Whatever proceeds from the Source of being is in itself, and in its origin, good; and yet there is much evil in the world; because that which is good in its origin and essence is abused and perverted by man. Thus, Love, from Him who is Love itself, entering into the will of man, becomes love, desire, affection in him. But it becomes such desire or affection as the character of his will may make it; and therefore love with evil men becomes love of self and hatred of others. In the same way truth becomes falsehood. And whatever in the natural world corresponds to and signifies love or truth, may also be used to signify their opposites; and sometimes the question, which of these is meant, may present a difficulty, although very generally the context makes it clear.

Love and Wisdom, in their divine perfection and infinity, are the Lord; and heat and light are their first and most general representatives in nature. For these flow continually from the sun, which is the image of

the Lord, and represents him in the work of creation. The whole material world is dependent upon and governed by the sun, and every thing in it stands in a definite relation to its heat and light; and this relation corresponds to the relation between spiritual things and Love and Wisdom. Hence, as there is nothing in nature which does not stand in its own definite relation to heat and light, so there is scarcely any thing which may not be used to represent and indicate Love or Wisdom in some of their forms or operations. The difficulty of always distinguishing these, of always discerning and applying aright the laws of the science of correspondence which relate to them, is similar to the difficulty we find in comprehending and classifying the things of nature, and acquiring a clear view of their natural causes, laws, and relations.

But there is nothing in this or any difficulty, which diminishes the worth of the science of correspondence, or should operate as a reason for neglecting the study of it. It will be understood that we have spoken of these difficulties only in reference to the endeavor to acquire a thorough knowledge of the science. What is there of equal value which does not demand equal labor? But this same science offers itself at once to the most simple, as explaining much that was before hopelessly dark, and as giving life and utility to many passages of the Word which were but a dead letter.

Indeed, the science has never been wholly lost, and cannot be. Some of its results are so obvious that they force themselves upon every mind; as for instance, the analogy between Love and Heat, and between Truth and Light. The very faculty of comparison, of which I have spoken in the beginning of these remarks, has always found its most delightful and elevating exercise in detecting and exhibiting these analogies. Poetry is full of them; and the loftiest and purest of all poetry is in the Bible, for the very reason that here the laws of correspondence exert their full influence. The proper function of the imagination is not to delude, or give to nothing the name of something. The Creator of man gives him no faculty of which the principal office is deception. We use our imagination aright, when we look above the low plane of sensuous thought, and bring higher truths down within the reach of reason; of reason in its childlike mood, loving to labor in the service of religion. The oriental world, say critics and philosophers, was always characterized by a disposition to figurative and parabolic expression; and *hence* the Bible is full of it! But the Bible is God's Word; and its fulness of symbolic language arises from its absolute conformity with the laws of correspondence. In the East, where, in the early ages of the world, the science which discloses these laws was well known, the remains of it, brought

down by tradition, and the effect of it perpetuated through successive generations, have imparted to the human mind in those regions that peculiar disposition.

It is of some importance to discard from the mind the idea that the science of correspondence offers a new translation of the Bible, to be learnt as others are. It is not as a foreign tongue that it is to be considered, for many reasons. In the first place, it is not, as we have already said, all foreign. In many passages the symbolic character is manifest, and the spiritual meaning comes to the surface, and is and always has been universally recognized. There are very many others, indeed the greater part of Scripture, where the internal meaning may be distinctly discerned, after a little acquaintance with the principles of correspondence and some practice in applying them. Then, however, the work only begins. Because the laws of correspondence are among the essential laws of creation and existence, and because all creation images and reflects the infinite attributes of the Creator, therefore the science of correspondence is itself infinite, and progress in it will be eternal. Therefore greater meaning and more fulness, variety and force of meaning will be discovered and constantly again discovered in the most familiar passages, as they are considered in connection with others, and in their relation to various laws of mind and of matter.

One thing should always be remembered in the study of this science. It is not a merely natural science. It is not one which stands disconnected from the will and the life. No science, and no truth, needs to be so disconnected; for there is no knowledge of any thing in the universe of God which should not point the way and lift the soul to Him. The time is coming when all the paths of truth will be found leading upwards to their origin. But other sciences *may* be so disconnected. This cannot be. The one thing which it teaches is the correspondence of the whole material world with the spirit-world; and its application to Scripture gives moral instructiveness and religious force to every passage.

We may understand, from its moral character, why this science was withdrawn from the knowledge of mankind. Recent investigations into the intellectual condition of the ancient world, are making it probable that those early times were illustrated by an amount of knowledge which, in some directions, equalled or surpassed all we now know; and it is quite as obvious that this knowledge was most peculiar in its character. The explanation of this we have in the fact that the science of correspondence was once familiarly known; that it was a thing of common perception; that the whole world of matter was transparent; a medium of light and not its veil. Of the race of man, as Words-



worth has said of individual man, "Heaven lay around him in his infancy." But as the heart became corrupted, and thence arose the danger of perverting and abusing this knowledge, it was withdrawn, at first into the secret sanctuaries of religion, and then into the concealed philosophies of earlier days; there it was for a while preserved and variously guarded, and its revelations came down by a far-descending tradition, more and more darkened and deformed, as there was among men less that welcomed spiritual truth, until at length it was almost wholly lost.

It may seem difficult to reconcile this decay and loss of truth with the constant goodness of God. Many pages would be needed to give an explanation of the fact and the reason for it. But that such is the course of Providence is obvious and certain. Why was Christianity delayed so long; why diffused so slowly; why now is its reception so limited? Without attempting at this time to answer the question, I refer only to the fact, as positive proof that it suits the purpose of Providence to delay and to measure his gifts of truth, in accordance with some kind of preparedness, whatever that may be. In the same way and on the same grounds, truths once given may be withdrawn, and again re-given with greater brightness and fulness, when unerring Wisdom sees that unfailing Mercy may safely bestow them. That time has come, and the

science of correspondence is now revealed again to man.

The fact that this revelation required, as its condition, a state of preparedness in mankind, may help us to believe that it requires, also, a state of preparedness in individual minds; nor need it be very difficult to understand this. If this science be studied from that love of knowledge, which has not within it the love of applying knowledge to its proper use, or if the ends and uses for which knowledge is sought be not sanctified by religion, if mental wealth be striven for as the aliment of pride, and self-love, and self-reliance, the woe pronounced on those who "trust in riches" falls upon it; and where this must be, it is the mercy of our Father which says again, "I have blinded their eyes lest they should see." The very first,—the earliest, and the chiefest preparation for this study, is a preparation of the heart; a cleansing of the motives; an earnest prayer for light, *because* light reveals duty.

Nothing can be said more opposite to the common belief than this; nothing which would seem to most readers more absolute foolishness. All around us prevails a settled conviction, that the understanding alone is employed or concerned in the investigation or acquirement of truth; that nothing is required as the condition of obtaining it but strong faculties duly cultivated and vigorously exerted. For there is an utter forgetfulness

and disregard of (founded upon a total ignorance of what is meant by) our Lord's declaration, that only as a little child can any one receive the kingdom of heaven, and that He reveals His truths to babes and sucklings. There can be no better evidence or illustration of the prevailing condition of the human mind than may be found in this disregard and ignorance. Natural and sensual truth now fills the horizon of the mental eye, and spiritual truth has faded out of sight.

We have reached that period, or rather that state of mind, denoted in the words of Israel to Dan. The patriarch had gathered his children to see him die; and in few, but pregnant words, he prophesied of each, what would "befall them *in the last days.*" Of Dan he says, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel. Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the heels of the horse, so that his rider shall fall backward." The twelve sons of Israel, as afterwards the twelve tribes, and still later, the twelve apostles, represent, as a whole, the whole church, or the whole mind of man; and individually they represent its distinctive elements. Dan's portion and residence were at the extreme north of Palestine, whence the phrase, "from Dan to Beersheba." His home was the coldest and the farthest from Jerusalem; and he represented the *sensuous reason*, as it may be called; or the disposition and

faculty of judging of things only by the senses, and by reasonings resting directly upon them. He corresponds to the apostle Thomas, who, after the Lord had arisen and stood before the disciples, could not believe, until "he laid *his fingers* in the wound." Yet Dan was one among the tribes, as Thomas was one of the apostles; because this faculty and disposition are good, and have a most important office to perform. Hence it is said, "Dan shall judge his people as one of the tribes of Israel." But let him judge only *his people*, and let him judge them as *one of the tribes of Israel*; then this faculty, acting within its proper shere and in a proper spirit, keeps the mind steady, and gives strength and clearness to conviction. Hence the apostle Thomas, when he did believe, spake as none other of the apostles did; "Thomas answered and said unto him, my Lord and my God." But in "the last days" Dan shall become "a serpent," "an adder;" for the serpent is an animal which cannot *leave the ground*, however agile and strong and able to penetrate every crevice or recess. It is said of him, "Upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life;" and he corresponds to and represents sensuous reasoning in its perversion and abuse. Paths are the way, by which men go forward, and truths are the ways by which the mind goes forward, and paths correspond to and signify truths; and it is in these truths that this ser-

pent now lieth in wait. The horse which draws or bears man along his paths, corresponds to and signifies the faculty of making progress in truth, and, as the chief of all, it denotes the understanding of the Word ; and it is this which the serpent now lying in wait in the paths of the mind, *biteth*, SO THAT THE RIDER FALLETH BACKWARD.

Perhaps it may be well to remark, that while the great purpose of the science of correspondence is to open the spiritual senses of the Bible, that is not its only effect. This science being a thing of familiar and universal knowledge in the earliest ages, was preserved in subsequent times under the form of tradition and mystery, as has been already said, and it formed or at least greatly influenced the fables and mythologies which have come down to us. These were much corrupted, and have reached us in a very imperfect form. Yet will they be found capable of interesting illustration. As an instance of this, the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration may be referred to. It is found almost everywhere. In Greece and Rome and Egypt and the East, it is seen, and in forms more or less disguised traces of it are discernible in nearly all the religions of which we know any thing distinctly. Differing somewhat in detail, it was always substantially as follows. He who is not good, passes at death into the form of some kindred animal, and thence into

another and another, until the circle of expiation being completed, he becomes again a man, and a redeemed and happy one. Now this doctrine was taught very earnestly by Pythagoras ; a man whom we can sneer at only when we can forget the vast influence he exerted in his own day, and through such men as Plato ever since, and the golden truths still discernible in the fragmentary remnants of his doctrines, and the fact that the system of the universe established by Copernicus was but a revival of his own, and the many other indications of the extent and accuracy of his knowledge. How, then, could he have taught such a folly? But are we sure that it is all folly, that it contains no certain, no valuable truth? Let us ask if the science of correspondence can explain it. Man, the microcosm, or little world, as Pythagoras and Plato and so many of the ancients called him, represents the universe. Thus, all animals that ever were or can exist, live by virtue of the fact that they severally represent some of the elements, faculties, or qualities of the human character. Goodness does not consist so much in the absence of any of these, as in the presence of all and their due subordination, and their harmonious performance of their several functions. Among the prophecies which foretell the establishment of a true church among men, or, (for it is the same thing upon a different scale) the establishment of a true

church *within* a man; are those which declare, that "the wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together; and the lion shall eat straw like an ox." He is a bad man, in whom this order and harmony are interrupted; in whom some one has usurped a supremacy and conquered the soul. Suppose that such a man begins to reform and is penetrated with a profound sense of evil. He becomes aware perhaps that he is lost and buried in foul and gross gluttony, and in his remorse he feels that he is not a man, that sin has transformed him, that he is no better than a hog! He says with the Psalmist, "I am as a beast before thee!" And he repents and reforms and casts this sin way. Then he discovers that his ferocity makes him a tiger, and the same process of acknowledgment, repentance, and reform, again relieves him, and then it may be he sees in himself the cunning of the fox, or other and yet other faults which disfigure and conceal his human nature. So he goes on, until this same acknowledgment, repentance, and reform have been repeated until they have cast out the devils and restored him to the power, the consciousness and the happiness of manhood. Now we know that Pythagoras had an inner

and secret doctrine, never published, and taught only in private to the initiated under the most solemn obligation of secrecy. Is it too much to suppose that these two doctrines, the inner and the outer, had some relation to each other? What would he have gained by teaching the doctrine as we have stated it above, to the gross and grovelling world about him? What better thing could he do than to teach them *the same truth* in the lower form of the metempsychosis, as he gave it to the public?

It is to be noticed that this doctrine in its lower and grosser form is adapted to do for the lower and grosser classes of minds, the very same good which the same doctrine in its higher form is able to confer upon minds, in a condition to receive it and be subject to its influence. They who would not resist gluttony, or ferocity, or low cunning, because they disfigured their spiritual humanity, might do so, if they were persuaded that they must expiate these sins in the bestial shape and life of the hog, the tiger, and the fox. In this lower form, its influence upon minds to which it was then fitted, would gradually elevate those which were capable of improvement into a capacity of hearing and profiting by the higher. This would be in exact conformity with the law which prevails over the relation between internal and external truth, and between the literal and spiritual senses of the Word. On similar



grounds I account for the universal prevalence of the doctrine of metempsychosis, which Pythagoras himself derived from Egypt. Apply this law to the Bible, and we shall come to the result already stated, that observance of the precepts of the literal sense is precisely the way in which we may be elevated into the purer atmosphere, where the voice of an inner law may be heard.

So, too, there are applications of the science of correspondence to the ancient classical mythology, which often make it significant. Sisyphus and Tantalus, and the like, are no longer the wild and meaningless creations of fantasy, and we can understand their permanence, and charm, and power, amid the beautiful cultivation of the Greek mind. Pegasus, the winged horse, again alights upon Helicon, and opens a new Hippocrene, and again Minerva tames his fire, and gives him to the warrior who is called to do battle with the monster Chimæra. But these things would carry me too far, and perhaps it would have been better not to have referred to topics which I have not space to explain.

To Emanuel Swedenborg was revealed, and by him was published for the instruction of mankind the spiritual sense of Genesis, Exodus, and the Apocalypse. His works on these subjects consist of about eighteen octavo volumes; and in them very many passages from

other parts of the Bible are incidentally mentioned and explained. In his other theological writings, which amount to seven or eight volumes more, he treats often of the science of correspondence and its principles. Books of various descriptions have been written by others, intended to assist in the study of the works of Swedenborg. The sermons of the New Church are generally explanations of Scripture. Let him, or her, who would inquire into this science, apply to these books and aids. Every single passage or text of Scripture, which is so learnt and understood, leads to others. When the mind is employed in the endeavor to apply the principles of correspondence, it may happen that a supposed meaning is not the true one, and a better knowledge will correct the error. As more and more examples of the spiritual meaning of the Word are understood, they will throw light upon each other, and gradually lead to a comprehension of the principles of the science of correspondence. In this case, as in all others, true knowledge will become the parent of knowledge. The progress may seem to be slow ; sometimes it will be toilsome and difficult ; but it will be PROGRESS. And it depends only on the mind, the motive, the purpose, and the heart of the student, whether that progress shall be eternal.

## THE HUMAN FORM.

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It is seldom that the word "Form" is used in any sense which would not be adequately expressed by the word "shape." Indeed these words are usually regarded as synonymous. But this is an error; and an injurious error so far as it limits the idea of form to its lowest and most external manifestation; for *shape* is but one manifestation of *form*. It is far nearer the truth to regard Form as the mode of existence. We can understand it better by considering it in its relation to its correlative idea—*essence*. For this purpose *essence* may be defined as *what* one is, while *form* is *how* one is. Essence is that from which a thing derives its quality and its power, while form is that *by* which a thing manifests its quality and exerts its power.

It is somewhat difficult for those who are accustomed to what has been called Philosophy, until quite recently, in England and this country, to admit that

essence has any reality. For this philosophy is the philosophy of sensuous thought, and it rests upon the foundations which were laid by Mr. Locke, in his *Essay on the Human Understanding*, with admirable skill and consistency. He proves, with all the force of demonstration, that if reflection makes use of no materials but the facts of sensation, and acknowledges no entities of an higher order, it can form or recognize no idea of essence; and as sensuous thought admits of no other materials, and acknowledges nothing more, he concludes that essence is nothing. And it is nothing within the range and scope of his system; for the idea of essence and whatever belongs to this idea, transcends the faculty and function of sensuous thought; and it is therefore true, that, viewed in this way, essence has no existence.

It is also true in fact, and as a conclusion of the strictest logic, that *essence* has no separate and independent existence whatever, because whatever exists must have its own distinct *form* or mode of existence. And it is also and equally true, that *form* has no separate and independent existence, because whatever exists must manifest outwardly and bring forth into effect its *essence*, or its own essential nature and use. Thus these two, essence and form, must combine to make up the whole of any real entity.

We repeat, that it may be difficult for those who are

accustomed only to a sensuous philosophy, or are wholly unused to consider subjects of this kind, to understand the relation between these two things. It is, however, of some importance. As soon as the words "Essence" and "Form" are presented to any mind, a dim conception comes at once of the superiority of essence over form; and a common use of the words "essential" and "formal" is expressive of the common sense of mankind, and is built upon and implies this conception. A negative and narrow philosophy, finding itself wholly unable to remove the dimness of this thought, imputes the darkness, not to its own eye, but to the object. It finds, in the very blindness which cannot discern the higher principles of mind, good reason for denying their existence and denouncing the results to which they lead. But a better philosophy takes us back to common sense, and at once confirms its impressions, and defines and illustrates them by the light of its own clearer views and loftier principles. Such a philosophy must recognize the soul, the destiny of man, the laws of his creation and his life, the purpose of his being, and his relation to its Infinite Source. It cannot but discern, that whatever exists, be it spiritual or material, of the highest or lowest worth, exists by virtue of an inherent and indispensable quality upon which its identity is founded, and which determines *what* the thing is; while it also exists in some parti-

cular mode, which is exactly suited to its true quality, and by means whereof that may come forth into action and influence, and perform the function for which it exists. If the true relation between essence and form be apprehended, it will be seen that the essence of a thing is that whereby and for which the creative Providence creates and determines the form; because the form is but the appearance and instrument of the essence, or its way of coming forth into existence and action.

This truth, like most others of importance, forces itself upon our recognition, and is always, however dimly, seen. Thus, when it is proposed so to arrange a society as that it may perform its destined use, it is not unusual to speak of its form and of bringing it into form, although the society cannot have a shape like any single thing. The common phrase of bringing irregular or incoherent matters into "form and order" implies an identity between *form* and *order*, which is far nearer the truth than the more common identity of *form* and *shape*. So, too, it is very properly said, that our thoughts are the forms of our affections, and again, that our thoughts form themselves into words. But still this truth is so imperfectly seen, that we are apt to suppose it has no real existence. We say that in expressions like those, we are only using figurative language; and then we think that we have no real

truth, until we descend far down, to the notion that there is no real *form*, but *shape*; for we do not know that we are then descending from the truth itself which is in the higher regions of the mind, down to its shadow, which lies upon the earth.

What we commonly call Form, is but the aspect which a thing bears when presented to our senses, or rather when our senses present it to our mind. This is the shape or the physical or material form. It is that whereby our senses take cognizance of the thing which however exists in its true and more internal form. Indeed, we usually limit this to the testimony of two of our senses, — the touch and the sight. Thus a rose is grateful to our sense of smell; and it requires but very little thought to be certain, that it must be the peculiar organization of the parts and atoms of the rose, which produce its peculiar fragrance. For this is just as certain as that the shape and colors of the rose give to it its beauty. Yet when we speak of the form of the rose, we commonly mean only so much of its form as the eye perceives. The same thing is equally true of whatever gratifies or affects the ear or the taste; although, as I have already said, we commonly limit our idea of form not only to the disclosures of the senses, but to two only of them.

I have said that physical form or shape is that whereby our senses of sight and touch take cognizance

of a thing. And it may not be useless to consider why our senses are given us; especially, as an answer to this question is obvious and easy. It is important to our well-being, that we should be able to know the existence, and recognize the presence of many of the infinite variety of substances which compose the world about us. Therefore we have senses, and these substances are so adjusted to our senses, and our senses to them, that we perceive their presence and existence. This perception of them, we call *them*; and the aspect under which they are perceived, or the testimony of some of our senses concerning them, we call their *forms*.

But there are also very many of these substances, not so revealed to us. They are latent: some are always invisible and intangible, others are so under ordinary circumstances. Gravity, electricity, the ethers, and all the forces and finest substances of nature are of this class. Science, by observation and deduction, discovers a part, and, as it improves, discovers more, and willingly acknowledges their immeasurable importance in the system of the universe; and yet, of all these things we usually say, they have no form. Although it is not only true that they must have form, but probable that they are the agencies by means whereof all grosser things are shaped. There is little harm in this, for the human mind must begin, as the child's mind



begins, with sensuous thought and knowledge ; and for this degree and mode of thought they have no form. But the mind ought, in its growth and development, to rise, and constantly to be ascending above the lowest plane ; and the progress in this direction has, as yet, been feeble and uncertain.

Still, though the growth of the mind upwards should be continual and constant, it should be like the growth of a tree, whose roots are firmly fastened in their native soil. The plane of sensuous thought and perception must forever remain the basis of all true knowledge, all sound belief, all wise and beneficent action. That we should not know this class of truths alone, or that we should not suppose it to stand alone, is important to the mind's progress ; that we should not deny, or forget it, is essential to its sanity. For it is but a false philosophy and a false religion, which will allow the feet no standing-place, and the heart no home.

In this case, as in many others, one extreme has produced another, and the opposite extreme of wrong is not often right. Ardent minds, shuddering at the darkness and pained by the fetters of the prison-house of sensuous philosophy, have broken forth and lost themselves delightedly in the misty mazes of "Transcendentalism," and other similar illusions. Symptoms of the reproduction of an ancient Gnosticism are visible around us. Rejoicing that thought is unchained, men

forget that it is unguided ; and it leaves the solid earth, upborne by the wings of fantasy ; its home is the pathless air, and its fruit is nothingness. Not very imperfectly is this fallacy typified by the popular error in eastern countries, where they suppose the Bird of Paradise never alights, and lives only on the wing. They deem her beauty and her name too glorious for the earth. But they forget that they thus doom her never to know the refreshment of rest amid the sheltering foliage, nor the joy of brooding over her young, in their still and steadfast nest.

These two errors are opposites ; and both may be best illustrated by again comparing the mind to a living tree. The falsity which believes in nothing beyond the plane and power of sensuous thought, mole-like, burrows in the ground, and is blind to the lovely sky and the blessed sun, and believes that the roots upon which it feeds in damp and darkness are all the tree, all that lives, all that is. But the opposite falsity would sever the living plant from its sustaining roots and cast it upwards, as if it could grow in the air, or live when sundered from its means of life. The truth, equally remote from both these falsities, tells us that the roots, the stem, the branches, and their ornament and fruit, all are necessary to the perfect and healthy tree. It traces the fostering sap from the rootlets, far below the surface, to the green leaf and the ripened fruit ; it

knows that the roots, forever at rest in their silent darkness, differ from the branches that answer in graceful motion to the wind, from the bright redundant foliage, from the varied beauty and fragrance of the blossom, from the fruit which gratifies the taste and sustains the life of man,—only as sensuous thought and knowledge differ from the loftier, purer, and brighter perceptions of a Reason which acknowledges Religion as its light and life. But it knows also, and never forgets, that all these things are indissolubly connected, all indispensably necessary. All are necessary, all forever necessary to us, to all of us, by the very constitution of our nature. And therefore it knows also, that as this world is adjusted to our senses, and our senses to this world while we live here, so, when we go hence, we shall find the spirit-world adjusted to our spiritual senses, or the senses of our spiritual body, in a similar manner, and for a similar use, and from a similar necessity. And therefore, there as here, we have a home; a world beneath, and above, and around us, cognizable by our senses, adapted to our wants, capable of administering to our eternal progress in goodness and in wisdom, full of all the means of usefulness and improvement, and therefore of angelic happiness.

Visible form, or shape, including the more internal organization, of which we become aware by research

and observation, are but the outer appearance of the true form; because that is, abstractedly considered, only the mode of being. But the visible, external form corresponds to and represents the true internal form.\* By this, it is not meant that there is an inner shape, of which visible shape is the image; but that the order, beauty, and adaptation to use of the true form, are represented and revealed by the visible form, because of the correspondence between them. Thus, when more is known of the soul of man, it will be seen that its faculties, proportions, functions, and enjoyments all exist in their own form, and are all represented by the corresponding visible form, which is its instrument and clothing. When this relation is seen, it will be readily believed that the soul without a body is impossible; and if it were possible, it would be naked, useless, joyless; that it must therefore have its spiritual body in the spiritual world. And this body must be in the image of the material body, because the material body being already in perfect correspondence with the soul, and so its perfectly adapted envelope, a spiritual body not in its image would be less perfectly adapted to be forever its dwelling and its instrument.

The truth revealed through Swedenborg teaches that the soul exists now and here in its own spiritual body, of which the material body is but the temporary cover-

ing, which is cast off at death ; that during this life, this material body is at once a medium whereby the spiritual senses perceive material things, and a veil which prevents those senses from perceiving spiritual things.

If, however, we would know the central truth on the subject of Form,—that from which all others flow, and by which they may be illustrated, it is this ; that God exists in a Perfect Human Form.

To those who are startled by this assertion, it may be useful to reflect upon the source of human life and character. If they have already realized that God alone is the source of being ; that all being, therefore, flows primarily from Him, they will begin to perceive that the humanity of man implies a divine humanity as its source. It is not the body and limbs, nor the senses, nor the speech which constitute man. They all belong to him, but only as coverings and instruments of that which truly makes him, man ; for this is his love and his wisdom in all their various forms of affection and thought, and all their various effects in life and conduct. Now, Love and Wisdom in their divine perfection, and their infinitely diversified operation, constitute God ; and, on a lower scale, and derived from Him, in their finite and imperfect reception and manifestation, they constitute man. On this lower scale and in their imperfection they constitute our Humanity, and in their infinite source and perfection they

constitute that Divine Humanity, from which our own is the derivation and effect, and of which it was made and is the image and likeness.

The human form as it exists in us, is, first the mode of being which springs from our essential nature, and is perfectly adapted to it, and this we will call our inner form; and next our visible form, our human *shape*, which again corresponds to and reveals our true and inner form; and this we call our outer form. This outer form is spiritual in the spiritual world, and so adapted to that world; and in this material world it is material, and so adapted to this world. But in both worlds our inner form puts on the outer form, that in this and through this its due relations with others like itself, and with the world about it, may be established, and its proper uses performed.

The human form of God is His Divine mode of being, of which ours is the correspondent and revealed image. For as Love and Wisdom in their perfection constitute God, and in Him have their appropriate and perfect mode of Being, which is His Divine Form, so in their imperfection they constitute us and our form: and this last is the express image of the former, because it is from Himself that God created man in his own image and likeness.

When our Father comes before the thought, for prayer, and worship, and love, He comes there as

our Lord Jesus Christ, Jehovah God. And when He appears to the senses of men or angels, and when he has so appeared in former times, we are taught by Swedenborg that He is and was manifest to sense, by filling an angel with His presence, so fully, that the individual nature of the angel is latent and inactive. An angel, so filled with the Divine, is called in Scripture the angel of the Lord. As in the third chapter of Exodus it is said, "The angel of the Lord appeared unto him (Moses) out of the midst of a bush;—and God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, I am the God of thy father;—and Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God." The word translated "angel," both in Hebrew and Greek, or in the Old and New Testaments, signifies *one sent*. But His constant presence in the heavens, is as the Sun of heaven. Its heat flows and is perceived as heat, but the essence and inmost of this heat is Divine Love. Its light flows and is perceived as light, but the essence and inmost of this light is Divine Wisdom. Through this Light and Heat He creates and preserves the visible spiritual universe, as, through the heat and light of the sun of this lower world, He creates and preserves the earths of the material universe. The angels ever see this Sun. They do not call it Him, nor think it Him, nor worship it in His place. But they know that within it and always acting through it,

He is, a Man, a Divine Man, from whose Divine Humanity their own is continually derived. As a Divine Man they worship and they love Him; and it is their constant effort to bring men into that love and worship, without which there is no beginning of angelic life on earth, and no preparation for it.

We have said that God exists in a perfect human form; we have not said that He exists in human shape. Form is more and higher than shape. Form belongs to all things of necessity; it is the condition of existence, and without it there can be no existence. But shape is for our senses, and for the sensuous reason, which is the proper basis and ultimate of all thought; it is the aspect or manifestation of form. It is that manifestation which brings the thing within reach of our *senses*, spiritual or natural, for it is they which recognize and measure shape, and thus aid and support the mind.

Let it not be supposed, however, that shape is nothing, or a delusion, or a weakness. For shape is the revelation of form in those things of which the senses take cognizance. And the truths we learn by means of shape, the impressions it gives, the feelings it excites, are not to be cast off as so many errors, but used as the means of progress; used for the information they perpetually give of the form which lies within.

Shape, the senses, and all their faculties and all they



tell us, are but the appointed means by which we may here and hereafter recognize persons, and discharge towards them our various duties, and also so use the outer world as to stand upright upon it, and possess it as our own, and grow into our destined stature. For between mind, on the one hand, and the objects of thought and perception on the other, forever lies the world of sense and shape. And this world is capable of two effects. It is, according to our constitution of mind and the use we make of it, a veil and a thick darkness, or a world of transparent media, exquisitely adapted to the perceptive faculty on the one hand, and to the highest objects of perception on the other. This adaptation is possible and is effected, because, between whatever is within and whatever is without, between the whole world of thought and intellectual life and the whole world of sense, there is an exact and constant correspondence.

Let us then hold fast to the great truth, that God ever remains Infinite in Form, filling all space without being subject to the limitation of space; and yet never forget, that His Form is truly and perfectly Human in the strictest sense and in all particulars. We may surely understand that something would be wanting in us, something without which our eternal progress and never-ending approach towards Him who is Perfection, would be checked and limited, if the

germs of all human perfection were not in us. But how are they in us, whence come they, if not from Him? Taken all together they constitute Him; and our visible form, which is the correspondent and exponent of our inner form, is also the correspondent and exponent of His Divine Form. For every thing in us, even to its least and most recondite fibril, proceeds from its prototype in Him, and in us images forth its origin in the Divine Humanity.

It is important to understand, that the correspondence between internal things and external, is in no sense arbitrary; for many results flow from it of great moment, not only in a philosophical point of view but in more practical relations. By virtue of their correspondence, internal things come into manifestation and adaptation to us, and so become externals; and again, externals may be regarded as internals, which have assumed an outward aspect and condition. This is true of form as an internal thing, and of shape as external, just as it is true of the spiritual sense and the natural sense of the Word. The effect of this, in relation to the Word, is, that these two senses do not contradict each other. The knowledge of the spiritual sense gives higher truths, opens and elevates the mind, and supplies new motives and means of progress. But he who has only the literal sense has also the means of making progress in the same direction. And when he,

who having learnt and loved and obeyed the commandments of the literal sense, acquires in this life or in the other, the spiritual sense, he does not discover that he has been in an error and misled; nor does he see one jot or tittle of what he had before pass away. But in the boundless treasures which he discovers within it, he finds new cause for loving it, and new and infinite cause for loving Him who gave it to him. So it is with the relation of form to shape, of the world of reality to the world of appearance. As we have already said, our senses are given us as a means of holding intercourse with each other, and of recognizing and using the world without us. And *shape* is *form* which has become adapted to a portion of our senses. Although it is most true, that, to comprehend the inner laws of being, the nature of the divine operation and the arrangement of heaven, we should know something of the true relation of shape to form, and rise above the level of merely sensuous thought, — it is also true that we are not to regard the senses as deceiving us in this matter. They tell us not what is false, but only a lower and more partial truth. Still, it is the appropriate truth for the beginning of the mind's progress. It is needful and wholesome truth; not to be cast away, but to remain as the footstool on which we stand while we look abroad on the clear air and up to the outspread heaven.

Nor are we to feel as if they were wholly in the wrong who do not rise above these sensuous thoughts. Far better is it to remain in them than to have no firm footing. Far better to stand still, upon the earth, seeing only the fields we humbly till, than to rise and be lost in cloud and mist. Hence, they who, believing that God is a divine man, so worship and love him, without knowing more of the attributes of a Divine Humanity, are in a far healthier and happier state of mind than they who reject this great and simple Truth, and regard God only as a diffused Essence, a Being without form, as that which the mind can in no way contemplate, and *therefore* as that which the heart cannot love. Recently, and in this neighborhood, it has become a prevailing form of thought, to regard the Divine Being as in fact and reality, wholly impersonal; and to consider the truth that He is a Spirit as excluding the possibility of His having Form. They who, really holding this opinion, give themselves up to it, and are contented with it, are they who are content without loving the Author of all good, and are willing to have a reason why they should not try to love Him. But there are those who hold to these doctrines in words, and even perhaps in their conscious thoughts, who yet, in the deeper region which these falsities have not darkened, feel that God is a person, and so give to Him their affections. It is not one jot more certain that only

a man, a person, can love, using the word in any proper sense, than it is that he only who is a person, a man, can be the object of love.

It might be supposed that views of the external, visible world, which regard its appearances as an accommodation to the senses, would produce in the mind a painful and embarrassing feeling of its unreality. But what is meant, is, that its *appearances* are adaptations of *realities* to sense.

There is no affinity between the philosophy which may be gathered from the works of Swedenborg, and that bewildering logic which has endeavored in most of the cycles of human opinion, and in the hands of Berkeley almost successfully, to destroy the reality of material objects.<sup>1</sup> This world is indeed the solid basis, the ultimate, of all existence. Shake it, and every sound doctrine of religion or of philosophy, trembles. The effect of the principles I have endeavored to state, is not to disturb this reality, but to penetrate to it through the veil of appearance. If we would know the effect of this upon the mind, let us consider some not very dissimilar instances, which already exist. Thus, we know that the sun is central and steadfast, and that the earth journeys around him and around itself. . But we *see* the solid earth motionless in space,

<sup>1</sup> See the note at the end of this Essay.

while the sun rises and sets to mark the day and night, and ascends towards the zenith in summer, and with a low and slanting beam gives the cold light of winter. But our *knowledge*, in this instance, inflicts no harm upon the appearance to sense, while it is eminently useful as the foundation of astronomy, and the application of its problems to navigation, and other departments of science and art. So will it be, but in a far greater ratio, when the truths which lie within sensual phenomena are discovered. Upon all the works of God we shall then see His words written. The phenomena of nature will then become the steps, the solid and enduring steps, by which the soul will rise from matter to spirit, from science to religion, from nature to God. And yet the beauty, magnificence, and sublimity of creation will lose no charm or power, and we shall walk upon the earth with a tread as firm as if we walked in ignorance.

Just so, too, it is in the spiritual world. Because the soul, or spirit of man, must live within a body or have no personal distinctness and identity cognizable to itself or others, and because the embodied spirit must have a world around it and senses to recognize and use that world, all these it has eternally. But the truth is known. The origin and nature of the spiritual objects of sense are known. Still, this knowledge lessens in no way the enjoyment and use of the things

of sense, but heightens them, even while the thoughts and affections are soaring far above. For it glorifies the outward world into oneness with the world within.

Perhaps it may be well to state, in a condensed form, the principles we have endeavored to illustrate. They are these. God is Man, perfect, Divine Man. He exists in Form, because so must every being. And His form is perfectly Human. From Him man exists and lives; from His Humanity that of man is derived. Form assumes shape, to meet, by means of sense and sensuous thought, the exigencies of life. Within these shapes and forms lies the creative influence of the Divine, in all its infinite varieties of Love and Wisdom; and the outward things created by and from the things within, correspond to, represent, and indicate the things within.

Innumerable and vast the inferences from this doctrine, and the instructions which it yields. Let me endeavor to suggest a very few of them.

As God is Man in a divine human form, that form is perfect, and perfectly adapted to be the instrument of Love and Wisdom. As man is made in the image of God, and made to be a recipient of the love and wisdom which are the life of God, and to live by receiving into himself those elements of divine life, so his form is after the divine type, and his shape, or body,

is the correspondent and image of that form and type. It is also true, that the whole heavens are in that form; for in the sight of God they are as one man; and this is true also of the larger societies which compose the heavens, and of the lesser societies which compose the larger, and so down through the vast series, until we come again to the individual man.

This seeming paradox may appear more intelligible and more reasonable, when we consider not only the principles from which it springs, but those practical and positive results to which it leads. For although this truth may indeed seem a paradox, when stated as above in all its length and breadth, yet something of it has always been apparent, always operative upon men's actions, and always implied by expressions in common use. Thus, the word "head" is often employed to indicate command and sovereignty; the heart, the eye, the arm, the hand, are used as symbols in like manner; and pages might be filled with similar illustrations. The truth itself may be stated in its most general form, thus. Every well-constructed and well-ordered society is in the human form, and every society which is in the way of improvement and progress tends to this form. This is true in some degree on earth; in the degree in which the mixture of good and evil here, and the constant change and fermentation of all things, permits it to be true. In the heavens it is perfectly



true. For all who are there are gathered into societies, and every one takes his place in his own society, according to his use and function. And the uses and functions of all the several members are correspondent and analogous to those of the several members of the human body. This is true in general, as of the head, the heart, the lungs, and other viscera, and the limbs; and it is also true in every particular, down to the least fibre and the finest fibrils of which the fibres are composed.

It is easy to see and admit this, in general and in reference to the principal members of the body; but our ignorance and sensual habits of thought make it very difficult to see that the same thing may be true in the least particulars. We may be aided, however, by reflecting upon the origin and purpose of human life.

Man is created by God, from His Infinite Love. He therefore creates man in such wise as to give him the utmost degree of happiness; and to this end creates him so that he may not only be the *object* of the divine love and wisdom, but the actual recipient of that love and wisdom, and the blessedness that attends their exercise. He creates him with a will and an understanding; with a will into which the divine love may flow and abide, and an understanding into which the divine wisdom may flow and abide. The will, by itself, is only a capacity of loving; but it has and feels no

love, nor desire, nor emotion, until the divine love flows into it, and fills it, and becomes in it such affection or love as the form and character of the will cause it to become. So the understanding, by itself, knows nothing and thinks nothing, being only a capacity of knowing and thinking. Into it the divine wisdom flows, and remains, and is developed, so far and in such manner or into such knowledge, and belief, and thought, as the form and character of the understanding may determine. Now, the Divine Love and Wisdom in the Lord are One, — but a one composed of infinite particulars. As one they flow forth from Him; in man they become immediately two, as love and wisdom or affection and thought are two. And not only so, but the indefinite varieties among the human family (having now no reference to those who pervert this influent love and wisdom by a life of wilful evil,) are produced by the fact, that in every man some of the infinitely diversified particulars of the influent divine life are prominent and predominant over others. In this way, and on this ground, one man differs from another. But because all these infinitely varied elements in their divine original and their essential unity constitute a perfect Human Form, no one of them is without or beyond that form; for each possible element of life or character is derived from that perfect Human Form which, with others, it constitutes, and to the perfection of which each one is essential.

Therefore, every man who receives that life, and in whom any one of its elements prevails, must be, as it were, *within* that form; that is, he must be governed by a principle of life, which, in the Divine, helps to form somewhat that is human. His character and functions must be such as may be represented by something correspondent in the human form, and by the use and function of that correspondent. Because all the elements of the Divine Life, though infinitely varied, are yet essentially One, therefore all who receive these elements of life and live from them, are, when conjoined by their mutual affection and operation, a one which is representative of the Divine One, from which each and all derive their being. Each represents and embodies some element of the Divine Life; and he stands to his neighbors in the same relation in which *his* element of life stands in the Divine Form to those other elements of life which *they* embody and represent. And as these elements of life constitute, in their original and perfect union, a perfect one, so all those who severally receive, embody, and represent them, do, when taken together, constitute a one, which receives, embodies, and represents the original and primal One.

For if the divine purpose in the creation of man, was to produce a being capable of great and abiding happiness, so the end and purpose of human life may

be said to be the reception of divine life, and the exercise in freedom and in blessedness of that life, in some of its forms of love and wisdom. Now some of these elements and forms of life would be inadequately received, if there were not those who could receive them as ruling elements of their life, and have their characters, their uses, and functions, and their happiness determined by them ; and thereby be made their representatives, their living forms.

Because the Divine Love and Wisdom as a One is infinite, and infinite because it embraces and includes infinite particulars, therefore the number of the human race upon all the earths is boundless, and its variety inexhaustible. From the beginning, and until that end which will never come, and through all the immeasurable universe, men have lived and are living and will live, and no two of them have been or can be alike in all particulars. Yet, although no two men ever were or can be precisely similar in all respects, all are alike in this,—that they are all *human* ; all are types of somewhat in the Divine Humanity ; and each one of them is human in the sense, the manner, and form, which are his own, and not another's.

Hence, all may live and work together. All may be as one in the sight of Him who is their common Father ; for, precisely as in the human body, although the difference between one part and some other part is as great

as can be imagined, as, for example, between the brain and the finger-nails, yet every one is precisely and perfectly adapted to all the rest. So perfectly adapted, as to be necessary and indispensable ; for every part of the human frame, even the noblest, would have something less to *do*, (and in *doing* consists happiness and health,) something less or different to *be*,—if every other part and portion of a part which belongs to human perfection were not present and connected with the rest.

It is therefore obvious that the condition of the whole, of all the human race considered as one, must be constantly and eternally improving. For every man who is born and becomes regenerate, and takes his place in the heavens, fills a place which was never filled before. It may be humble or lofty, small or great, but it is his own. Because he fills it, something of the Divine Form which was before represented only subordinately and in general, becomes now more fully and precisely represented by a more adequate correspondent. Therefore, that element of the divine life flows forth and is received more fully ; its use, and good, and blessedness are brought forth in greater clearness and fulness ; and the Heavens as one, as one Man, the child of the Almighty, is created more completely into the image and likeness of our Father.

Nor is this all ; for it follows as obviously that with

the growing perfection of the whole, grow the perfection and happiness of every one. Because they all constitute one universal man, the strength, health, and happiness of all become that of each. Precisely as in the human body, where by the wholesome action of the whole frame, and its universal health, the proper vigor, peace, and comfort of each part are promoted and secured. As these increase and expand in the whole, so they do in all the parts. A truth, which like every other universal truth, is true first, on the greatest scale, or in the heavens as one man, and then by derivation true in particulars and individuals.

As the heavens grow in their perfection, the earths receive through them more fully of the divine life, for the heavens are the mediums through which that life passes; and thus improvement, eternal progress, is the constant law of the universe.

Every man who passes into the other world, takes a place in some one of the societies of that world. If in heaven, the society to which he belongs, and his place and function within it, are determined by the peculiar good which he does and loves to do. This place is not arbitrarily assigned to him or chosen by him. It is, as it were, of his essence; it belongs to him by his nature. He may, in the exercise of his freedom while here, become qualified to fill that place, and perform and enjoy its heavenly uses, or he may become qualified to

fill only its opposite in the hells. It is to be remembered, also, that the energy with which he discharges his duty and enjoys its blessedness, the warmth of his love for that usefulness, and the clearness of his perceptions of the truths which belong to it, may vary indefinitely. They do vary according to the measure of the development of his internal powers and affections by regeneration, which is a work that not only admits but requires his coöperation. Thus, while what may be called the quality of his happiness is determined by the essential character of his will and understanding, we may regard the amount of it as also dependent upon his own exercise of his own freedom.

While in this world, every man receives life through the heavens as the medium between him and God; and more particularly through that society to which he is most akin, and still more particularly through those members of that society who are individually nearest to him. As, while he lives here, his state is often changing, so he changes the spiritual associates who are the especial media of life to him. For it is resemblance and conformity which bring them together and keep them together. These changes are determined by his progress upwards or downwards. They are, by the infinite providence of God, such and so adjusted as to lead him to his final place through means and influences compatible with his entire freedom. They

prepare him for that place, in such wise and so far as, in the exercise of that freedom, he is willing to be prepared.

There are practical results from these views of great value. Thus, if we look at the human body, and ask what constitutes its highest health and greatest vigor, we shall see that it is the absolute prevalence of neighborly love among its parts and members. For every part of the human body works for all the rest, and not directly for itself. The brain secretes its nervous fluid, and sends it in a stream of life to give sensibility and motion to the whole body. The heart impels its current of living blood even to the extremities, and the lungs are busy in purifying and vitalizing this blood for the service of the whole. The stomach and viscera are always employed in elaborating and preparing the means of life. The limbs move the body where it would go, and procure for it the means of nutriment. The eye sees every thing but itself, and the senses generally take notice of all things but themselves. Yet every part and organ lives and flourishes, because for it all the rest are unceasingly employed. As long as order and health prevail, no part appropriates any thing to itself or works in any way for itself, excepting so far as to secure for itself the full power of doing its proper work for others. In this condition and in this law of the human body, we have a vivid picture



of the true order of human life. We may learn here by the opposite of this order what self-love is. When we see that the moment any part of the body diminishes its labor for others, or begins to appropriate to itself more than its capacity of usefulness requires, that moment disease begins; and if this selfish indulgence continues, disease leads on to death;—when we see this, self-love stands unveiled; for we may see in this its evil, its destructiveness, its true nature. Because God is Love, and His Divine Form is the perfect form of love, and man is created in the image and likeness thereof, therefore the body of man is the living image of the love of the neighbor, and is the exact opposite of self-love. Therefore, it is the one condition of its health and vigor, that, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot, no self-love should be found in it. The moment this infernal poison enters and acts, disease comes with it and grows with it, until death ensues. In the body, love is the only law of life; self-love the one law of death; and this is so with the body from no other cause than that it is so with the soul, of which the body is the image.

Let us now see how it is with the societies of heaven, each one of which is also a Man. In them every individual has his own place and function, and is respected in that place. There is subordination, and command, and obedience; all perfect, prompt, spontaneous, as the

command of the brain and the obedience of the hand and foot ; so perfect, and so spontaneous, that it may not assume the aspect nor bear the name of command and obedience. There is no more thought or feeling of arrogance and pride, or envy or humiliation, than exists among the members of the healthy body. The highest feels and knows, and is glad to feel and know, his perfect dependence upon the lowest. And this feeling is reciprocal and universal, because the union which binds them together is not disturbed by any conflicting affection.

Nor is there in this doctrine any thing which lessens or limits the variety or the resources of human action or enjoyment. True it is, that the good man can do nothing which is not *human*, and which does not work in with what others are doing, so as to make a human form of the whole. But it is not less true, that this human form is from a divine Original, which is not only a perfect humanity, but an Infinite Humanity, containing infinites within itself. Hence it can never be exhausted ; hence it is, and always will be, impossible to conceive of any human faculty or taste or tendency, which, if it be not tainted with self-love, may not find within the limits of an Infinite Humanity work to do, which shall employ its utmost strength in perfect freedom, and give back the recompense of happiness.

From this view of heavenly society, let us descend

to earth, where its image ought to dwell. Precisely in proportion as influences from heaven are dominant upon earth, order and subordination, and command and obedience, will here also coexist with freedom. They will join to produce mutual respect and all the happiness that belongs to a brotherhood of love. Law itself will be but the form and instrument of liberty, and order its effect. There will be none so low, that the highest needs him not, and owes him nothing; none so humble, that any others may look down on him with pride. None so high and none so low, as to give room for arrogance or humiliation; because no person can be so feeble or so poor, that he has not a duty to perform, which, *being performed*, makes him one with the highest and the greatest. This would be the perfection of social and political life; and the approach to this will always measure the progress of society.

In the whole universe of God's creation, Love is the rule, the order; and self-love is the exception, the disorder and disease. In man, self-love is possible, because it is the abuse of that freedom which is given to him that he may freely love to love. Because self-love thus exists and acts in man, its baleful impress is to be seen in all the disorder of creation,—in the angry tempest and desolating volcano, the deadly cold of winter and withering heat of summer, the ferocity of the brute, and all the suffering which mingles its tones

of wailing and despair with the sweet voices of nature. All these things are here, because the world without mirrors the world within. But if we would know with clearness and precision the operation and effect of self-love, we may discern them, as has been already said, in the disorder and disease of that human body which was made to be the image of the divine form and divine order.

Little reflection and experience are needed to know, that in the social world self-love is the source of mischief. So true is this, that society is obliged to protect itself by forms of courtesy and politeness, which simulate forbearance and benevolence, and without which men would fly from each other like the wildest of the brute creation. But, although artificial politeness can disguise or repress selfishness so far as to make human association practicable, and although habits of courteous demeanor are of great value, because they exert a strong influence upon the feelings, and make them less harsh and savage in their selfishness; nevertheless, it is not from this source that the soul can draw a healing medicine. It must seek a purer spring, a deeper well. If it would be cured of the disease of self-love, it must drink of the living waters of religious truth. And all genuine truth is indeed religious, and always seeks to reascend to its divine source.

While common sense teaches the expediency of mu-

tual love; and all just views of the moral world, of the duty and destiny of man, confirm, illustrate, and elevate the lessons of expediency; I have endeavored to exhibit that other confirmation and illustration which may be derived from the consideration of the human form. Nor would it be difficult to construct on this basis an exact and rigid demonstration of the law of charity. We need assume, for the groundwork of the argument, only that God is Love and Wisdom, and that he creates man from Himself. It follows that He so creates him that He may give him of His own love and wisdom, because this being the greatest good that He can give him, is that which infinite Love would desire to give. And as His own Divine Form must necessarily be the perfect Form of His own perfect Love and Wisdom, the form of a man, mental and bodily, must be in the image and likeness of that Divine form, that it may be the best adapted to receive, appropriate, and exercise the same elements of life. This form must, therefore, be in the whole and in its parts, in its laws, and order, and operation, an image and reflection of the form, the laws, and order of love. We may perceive this in the mental and moral constitution of man by reason; and we may discern it in his material and physical constitution, by the senses and their experience. Nor is there any other difference between these two modes of the manifestation of the same truth, excepting, that down

in the lower plane of physical life it is open to sensuous observation, and to that exact and definite knowledge which is comparatively easy in that degree of thought and perception.

Let it not be supposed that the New Church claims the discovery of this analogy. It is of the mercy of God that a truth so universal and so powerful could not but force itself into sight and recognition. But we may now see the origin of the analogy, and pursue it to its results, and connect this truth with its kindred, and bring the scattered rays of light into union and harmony. Among the interesting legends of antiquity, is that of Menenius Agrippa. Whether modern criticism has succeeded in making it a legend only without fact; whether such a person as Menenius ever quelled a Roman rebellion, or soothed the angry jealousy of an infuriated multitude, by the fable of the body and its members, are questions of little moment. For it is beyond question, that the fable has always been remembered and repeated, and its instructiveness recognized.

The instruction derived from this source may be universal, embracing all topics within its scope and influence; and it will be eternal to those who receive it, forever new, and ever growing with the capacity of receiving it. For the mysteries of the bodily organization of man are without end. Science may go on to

discover within the least fibrils of to-day, others yet more delicate to-morrow. More may be continually learnt of the functions and the laws of the parts and of the whole, in sickness and in health, in decay or growth ; but the whole will never be known, for upon it is impressed the seal of the Infinite.

The body is the adequate image of the soul. Whatever may be learnt of it, in the present days of cloud, and of a night which is drawing towards the morning, or in the coming ages, when the light whose upward ray is now scarcely discernible shall have brightened into the splendor of unclouded day, whatsoever *can* be learnt of the human body, that knowledge will reveal somewhat of the mind, the soul, the life within.

And the stream of knowledge will flow on ; its waves rejoicing as they swell with ever-growing affluence, and roll o'er sands of ever brighter gold, and bear the waters of refreshment to the living plants upon their shores. And among those plants, forever drinking in those waters, are the trees of God, whose leaves are for the healing of the nations.

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NOTE, p. 98.

As it is possible that this book may fall into the hands of some one who loves the study of philosophy, I would suggest to him, what

indeed, if he has drank of its earlier fountains, he must know, that the distinction of "form" and "essence," and an investigation of their attributes, lies near the centre of the ancient philosophies. In these days, we are so much wiser than Plato and Pythagoras, one risks something by alluding to them in terms of respect. It may be safer to come down to modern times, and speak of Kant. I do not pretend to understand the whole of his system, and its exceeding difficulty has indeed — with other causes — deterred me from a very thorough study of it. But I regard it as the greatest movement in philosophy that has occurred for centuries, and much of the light which it casts upon mind can be denied or unseen only by ignorance. The distinction, which he did not invent, but restored and illustrated, and has made permanent in all philosophy, that between the *subject* and the *object* of thought, is of great importance. The *subject* is that which — *subjacet* — underlies all faculty or power, while the *object* — *objacet* — lies as it were against faculty or power, and is perceived by them and acted upon by them. The *subject* of sight is the eye, which supports and possesses the faculty of seeing, while the *object* of sight is any thing towards or upon which that faculty is exerted. We contemplate or consider a thing *subjectively*, when we regard it as within us, as ourselves, as a part of our identity, or as a German would say, as a portion of our Me. We consider it *objectively* when we look at it as external, abroad, separate from us, and at a greater or less distance. Thus we may say, that it is the great end of Providence that man should be not only the *object* of divine love and wisdom, but the *subject* of them. My principal purpose, however, in speaking of this distinction, is to refer to what is not so much a conclusion, as a fundamental axiom, of the Kantian philosophy, and of the many which have sprung from it: namely, that we can know nothing whatever either of the *subject* or the *object* of thought or perception, *as they exist in themselves*. We know them only relatively, and as they affect each other. Thus of the *subject*, our Me, — we can know nothing but that it has a capacity of being affected and acted upon in a certain way, by the objects all



around us. And of any *object*, we can know only that it is a some thing which acts or reacts upon and affects our ME in a certain way, producing certain sensations or emotions. What it is that sees, or what it is that is seen, we do not and cannot know, because our knowledge is necessarily limited to the impressions which the thing without us produces upon us. And this axiom is sound and indisputable, within the limits of that system. Vast were the efforts, and various and strange the means, used by the ancient philosophers to escape from this conclusion; but they did not escape. Now, however, he that will apply to the incontestable principles of ontology, the doctrine of the New Church, respecting the source of all being, and the manner in which the ultimates of existence are fashioned and vivified by Him from Himself, may find that Religion is the true key to Philosophy; that they are indeed one. I cannot but hope that the reader who regards this remark merely as the ebullition of my blinding love for the doctrines of my church, will not be so convinced of this as to let the suggestion pass wholly unheeded, if his taste and pursuits lead him to the study of philosophy.

## RELIGION.

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THE origin of the word Religion is not certain, but it is supposed to be derived from Latin words, which signify to bind again. If so, from the very elements of its composition, we may infer that religion seeks to bind again that which has fallen away or broken-loose; to rebind man to God; to reattach him to the Source of all good, by a chain whose links are love, while the hand which binds it round the heart knows no touch but that of mercy. Religion is a universal fact, indefinitely varied with ages and races; falsified, until it represents itself in idols of grotesque deformity, and darkened until neither the light of truth nor that of hope glimmer in its abysses. Still, religion is everywhere.

Its universal presence is often noticed, and often explained somewhat vaguely by the demand of human nature for supernatural thoughts, and hopes, and fears;

by our innate propensity to look beyond nature for protection and assistance, when death impends, and the blows of calamity have fallen, and every thing which belongs to earth fails or assails us. But there is an explanation more simple, direct, and adequate. Man lives that he may ascend to heaven ; this was the end which God proposed in his creation, and holds in view in his whole care of the inward and outward life of every individual. For this universal end, religion is the universal means ; and, therefore, in some shape or other, it is offered to the mind of every man. The end or purpose of the divine government is always the same ; it cannot change with time or place, or circumstance. But men vary, and therefore the means by which this end is sought are also varied. Hence comes the variety and diversity of religions, or rather of the aspects under which religion presents itself to men. It is made, by Him from whom it comes, to take the form and offer the motives, and enforce itself by the sanctions, which are best adapted to the race of men to whom it is given ; and this necessity of adaptation is the first cause that its difference, in different periods and nations, is almost as boundless as the difference among men. But another cause may be found in the various ways and degrees in which men have falsified and perverted their religion.

It is the free gift of God ; and from heaven it de-

scends, a heavenly gift, But when it reaches earth, it assumes a dress which may veil its splendors, and fit them to a diseased eye. And thereafter, in the hearts and minds of men, it is gradually mingled with the corruptions which it finds. Constantly in conflict with them, it is assailed and wounded. Always combating with errors, they, day by day, stain, distort, and poison it, until its beauty is soiled, and its strength becomes weakness, and its life decays, and its words no longer have power to save; then it passes away, and another is given in its place; and hence the succession of churches which marks the history of the human family. Nor could this be avoided, because the freedom of the human mind is the supreme and absolute condition without which religion can do no portion of its proper work, and that condition must be preserved, although the abuse of this freedom necessarily leads to the perversion of religion.

The true and constant purpose of religion is twofold; and it may be stated with precision and certainty. It is, first, that men should be good; and then, that they should give the glory of their goodness to God. This is not the purpose of religion now only, or here, or under this form or that, but always and everywhere. Nor is this the purpose of religion by the arbitrary appointment of its Author; but it follows by irresistible necessity from the constitution of His nature and of our nature.

It is the essence of love to wish to give something of its own to another. God is love — is perfect, infinite love. Therefore, it is His constant and universal desire to give to man something of His own, something of Himself — to give to him, Himself; that is, to give him Love. This was the Divine desire, from which man was created; and from this Divine desire, man was so created that he might receive of the Divine Love, and appropriate it to himself, and live by it as his own love and life. But this love is the love of goodness, of every thing good, and of that only; and therefore, in proportion as a man loves what is good, he answers the purpose for which he was created, because in that proportion he permits God to give him of Himself. Therefore it is the first purpose of religion, — which is the divine means whereby the divine ends may be accomplished, — to make man good. But selfishness is the opposite of love and of good. A disposition to love self, and to give to self what belongs to another, is the exact opposite of the disposition which it is the purpose of religion to produce and conjoin. And the greatest possible injustice and selfishness consists in attributing to one's self that goodness which comes as the free gift of Him who alone is Good. It is therefore the purpose of religion, not more to make man good, than to make him know and acknowledge that this is the work of God. Indeed, these two things are one; be-

cause genuine goodness in any man must necessarily exclude the thought that he is good of himself and of his own proper power, since it must necessarily exclude selfishness and injustice. There is yet another reason for this conclusion. Wisdom is the thought and form of love; and because God is Love, He is also Wisdom; and if He seeks to give to man of Himself, he must seek to give him wisdom, or truth, in the degree in which man can receive it. He works for this end, too, by means of religion; and therefore religion must oppose the perfect falsity that man is or can be good of himself alone, and must strive to teach and enforce the opposite truth.

I have dwelt upon this purpose of religion, — one, although capable of being seen under a twofold aspect, — because, when we have in our minds a definite and just view of this purpose, we have a standard whereby we may measure the character, condition, and operation of all churches, in all their periods of morning, noon, or night, and judge of their mutual relation and influence, and understand their succession in the order of time.

If we apply this test, we shall discover in every religion somewhat which leads towards this purpose, and somewhat that leads away from it. We shall find some elements of its divine original, and some of the perversions which result from man's endeavor to provide for its requirements substitutes more agreeable to unregene-

rate human nature. Thus, from the very earliest ages, and among all nations before the Christian era, sacrifices of some kind were in use. These, in their origin and primary use, were rites which served as aids of a pure religion. To "sacrifice," means to make a thing sacred; and to offer a thing in sacrifice to God, originally meant and was known to mean, an acknowledgment that it came from Him and was His. Everywhere at first, as in the ritual of the Jewish Church, only things useful to man and without blemish, were made the subjects of sacrifice. All of these had their distinct meanings, by the laws of correspondence, which were once familiarly known, and of which the memory has never wholly passed away. The fruits of the earth, oil, and the finest wheat, the dove, the lamb, the ox, all are representatives. They all exist from spiritual causes. These causes are affections and truths. The objects themselves may be regarded as these affections and truths brought down into the ultimate substances of nature; and these their inmost causes they represent and signify. To those in the earliest ages, who, in the light and purity of an unsullied nature, saw in all the brightness and beauty of earth only the shadow of the glory of heaven, these objects were as living mirrors. They constantly suggested that which they constantly represented. They were offered to God, in acknowledgment that they were His, and were

received from Him. Hence the act of sacrifice was a useful act; the wheat, the oil, the wine, were offered to God, as a confession that the things they represented were his gifts; and the offering was useful, because it tended to keep fresh in the memory and in the heart, one of the great laws upon which all religion and all true goodness must ever rest, namely, that every thing good is God's, and His alone, and is ours only as it is derived from Him; and hence again, in some form or other, it was a part of all religions.

But the human nature, for which this was given, and to whose instruction and elevation it was adapted, stood necessarily in opposition to it. And this opposition produced not an abolition of the practice, but a perversion of it into its precise opposite. The evil tendencies of a corrupt nature laid hold upon the rite which warred against them, and made it their captive, their prey, their instrument. As early as the remotest historical ages, sacrifice was, perhaps everywhere, regarded and practised as a substitute for goodness; as a vicarious offering to God, instead of that goodness which His love offered to man and urged him to receive. This is almost the only idea of sacrifice which we find in the world. Out of it grew countless horrors and abominations. As a substitute it would more avail, as it was more precious; and hence, after men had thrown their treasures upon their fires, they cast their children into them, and at



length their brethren. More and worse than this, not life alone, but all that gives it worth and beauty, were offered up; and prostitution became, and to this day in some countries is, an act of worship. Out of this falsity, or in connection with it, grew up the appalling monster, penance. There is quite enough left on earth to tell us what this was, and what it did. By the side of the temples where women worship by public sin, and thronging round the fires which reduce to ashes the dead husband and the living wife, are those who would force their way to heaven by self-imposed and long-continued agonies. In its beginning, and in its essence, their religion tells them to beware of the lusts of the flesh; and they think they obey these precepts, or rather they do obey them, as they have come down through generations of corruption, when they gash their flesh with burning knives, and waste it away in torments. This terrible mistake was systematized; it gathered collateral falsities about it, and built a monstrous structure which it called religion. So firmly was this cemented by the evil passions of human nature, that it cumbers the nations with its vast fragments even in our own day. Who has not heard of the car of Juggernaut? And even that appalling horror is but the lingering remnant of a false religion, of which the pictures of ancient eastern literature give, probably, a true representation. A prevailing theme therein is the

successful ambition of the ascetic, who, like the Kehama of Southey's Poem, forced from the reluctant gods, by his terrible penances, a share of their divine power, not only against their will, but in despite of the prescience which told them it was to be used against themselves.

When we look upon pictures so painful and abhorrent to all our customary feelings, we turn away with wonder that human nature could ever have assumed so horrible an aspect, — and with gladness that we have nothing within our own experience or observation which could assist us to comprehend a depravity so monstrous.

But there are two modes of contemplating this subject, which may not be without their use. One will explain it, and show how it arose from the eternal conflict between the unchangeable purposes of a true religion, and the essential principles of that human nature which it is the function of religion to regenerate and heal. The other will, perhaps, show that the same conflict continues now, and has again destroyed a religion, and again represents itself all around us under analogous falsities. We have not the temples of Jugernaut. For the conception and portraiture of such a person as Kehama, the poet was driven to eastern traditions. But the dreadful falsehood so pictured was no casual, no local thing. Its roots were as deep as the

abysses of human depravity. It towered to a height, which wearied even the wing of fantasy, made insane by sin. And its far-reaching shadow darkens our own horizon.

The purpose of religion is to make men good. It is a necessary thing, because the untaught and uninfluenced nature of man is not good; universally necessary, because this is true of all men. Between religion, therefore, and that nature which it comes to change and re-create, there is a direct antagonism. Religion and nature not only oppose each other, but have power over each other. And because the essential principles of both remain ever the same, although their aspects and manifestations vary very much in different ages and periods, so their influence and operation upon each other must be always essentially the same, although varying in form and appearance.

If we remember that the one purpose of religion is to make men good; and that it is this purpose which human nature at once needs and resists, we may easily see, that the one, the general way, in which man escapes from religion, must be by substituting for its requirements something which may take the place of goodness. For although the nature of man opposes religion, it cannot destroy this gift of God. It comes from its Divine Source with sanctions too mighty; it speaks with too much power to be wholly disregarded. A

nation of men professing indifference to religion, has never existed, and cannot exist. All that human nature can do, in its most virulent and most successful efforts against religion, is to falsify and pervert it, and *thus* escape its requirements. Hence, it learns that religion demands the giving up of that we value most; and it gladly builds the altar, and lays amid the fires its food, its treasures, on condition that it may retain what it loves far more, its selfishness and impurity. This delusion grows and ripens, until man believes he acquires a right to sin, by a bargain with the sinless, which religion sanctifies. And then the power of religion is directed into a channel which leads away from goodness. That power may yet remain vast, awful, overshadowing the earth like a cloud: but the chief evidence of its power is in the torments it inflicts, the destruction it enjoins, until whole hosts are sacrificed, as in Mexico, and the doorways of the temples of the gods are but the narrow beds of streamlets of human blood.

It is the same with the idea of penance, or self-inflicted punishment. The sense of remorse is painful. But the voice of religion cannot be mistaken, when in its uncorrupted tones it denounces sin. As the sinner hears it call upon him to fast—to fast from his wicked indulgences, to abstain from envy and covetousness, and the crimes they breed,—he strives, perhaps, to

obey, but not enough to overcome his evil impulses. He yields, and when the hour of sin has given way to that of remorse, he inflicts upon himself some punishment as a compensation for that pain,—the pain of resistance,—which he would not endure in the hour of temptation. The truth demands repentance; but penance is far easier. It is thus he endeavors to assuage the pangs of an awakened conscience. With every repetition the habit is confirmed; with every new instance it becomes more common; until the habit assumes the sanctity of religion, and is universally established. Then religion, which asks only self-control, is understood to demand self-punishment; and with this human nature is satisfied. Let it sin to-day, when pleasure calls and passion urges, and it is willing to pay the debt by the scourge or sackcloth to-morrow, and thus purchase, at a cheap rate, the gratification of its lusts, and the quiet of its conscience.

Because this dreadful falsehood has its roots in the kindly soil of unregenerate nature, it grows, and spreads its branches in every direction, and bears a fruit more monstrous than itself. There soon comes the idea, that penance will do more than pay for sin. That it has a power of its own; and if there be no sin for which it discharges the debt, or if there be more penance than enough to balance the account, it gives a merit whose claim cannot be disputed, and

rends from the unwilling deities a portion of their omnipotence. Thus is the work consummated. For when the abuse of religion has reached this point, its use has passed away, and slowly or suddenly it abides its doom of death.

The perversion of all truth, perhaps, never reached this extreme, or took just this form among the Jews. That peculiar people had a peculiar safeguard in the written Word, which exactly defined their religious rites and ceremonies. But it is an instructive fact in the history of this nation, that when they fell into idolatry, they adopted many of these horrors from the surrounding nations. Thus, we read in Jeremiah: "Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, the which whosoever heareth, his ears shall tingle. Because they have forsaken me, and have estranged this place, and have burned incense in it unto other gods, whom neither they nor their fathers have known, and have filled this place with the blood of innocents. They have built also the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt-offerings unto Baal."

Let us return to that most corrupted condition of religion which we have described, and which prevailed among many, if not most of the nations of antiquity. Many records of this we have, and much indisputable evidence, even without the painful traces which exist in our own times. Nor need they be without instruc-

tion; for they should help us to penetrate the disguise under which the same influences have been at work, and the same effects produced even to the same final result, in the Christian religion and the Christian Church.

This church was for some centuries humble and persecuted. During this period of adversity, it retained a high degree of purity and truth. But after three hundred years of humility and integrity it ascended the throne of Constantine, and no sooner was it allied with the powers of the earth, than the stains of earth were seen upon its vesture, and the poison began to eat into its heart. The emperor summoned the Council of Nice, to put an end to the controversy which had arisen between Athanasius and Arius, and this council established the Tripersonality of God and the doctrine of Imputative Faith; and about the year 400, St. Augustine earnestly and eloquently advocated the doctrine of Justification by Faith alone, through elective grace. We may say that he was a good man, if it is possible for any evidence to prove such a fact. And he brought forward his doctrine to encounter and defeat the heresy of Pelagius, who taught the sufficiency of man to his own salvation. The church had power enough to overcome this heresy, though not to extirpate it, and adopted the doctrines of Augustine as the means. And soon these doctrines were seized and used by the irreligious tendency of human nature, and upon them was built a

substitution of faith for charity ; of believing aright, in the stead of doing good and being good ; and this was the first step taken by Christianity towards its consummation. As in earlier churches, sacrifice, ritual, and penance had taken the place of the requirements of religion, so now, naked faith, mere belief, began to assume the same place, and do the same work of permitting men to be irreligious under the name of religion. But this doctrine never reached its height in the Catholic church. Still other substitutes were sought and found. Substitutes of a lower, more sensual, more grovelling kind, and therefore better suited to the nature of man in that day. The forms of heathen idolatry were adopted, with changes barely sufficient to disguise and adapt them to their new circumstances. Saints were worshiped, and their altars hung round with votive offerings, as had been the gods of Greece and Rome. It is said that the statue of St. Peter, in Rome, which is worn away by the kisses of adoring multitudes, is but an ancient statue of Jupiter. This fact would symbolize and illustrate with great exactness the way in which Christianity was made to adopt, from heathenism, the means of escape from religion. So, too, the whole doctrine of penance was received and incorporated. In our own day, it is seldom carried to great excess, although a part of the Roman church wherever that exists. But the monks, in the loneliest retreats,



macerating their bodies with watching, and fasting, and the scourge; and the enthusiasts, climbing to the top of a lofty pillar, and abiding there for years, remind us of the self-tormenting penances of the East. One of the doctrines of the Roman church is quite remarkable in this respect; it is that of Supererogation. This teaches that saints and the very good, may, and actually do, acquire more merit by good works and penances than are needed for their salvation, and the surplus forms the treasury of the church, which she can bestow upon those who need forgiveness. Connected with this doctrine was the sale of "indulgences" and other abuses, which were the immediate causes of Luther's revolt. How close the analogy between this doctrine and the Eastern notion, that penance and good works may more than save, may draw down divine power and make the man superhuman! It would be easy to illustrate this topic at great length; to accumulate evidence in proof of the fact, that human nature had confronted and attacked Christianity, and wrought upon it changes and effects singularly analogous to those which had been exhibited in earlier ages, as the result of the conflict between the religions of those days, and the human nature which it was their office to heal and elevate.

And so the work went on. I need only allude to the worship of saints and relics, to support the assertion

that the Catholic church became eminently idolatrous. Indeed, idolatry and penance grew and strengthened themselves and spread, until the poison tainted the springs of life; and then the church died. Always, in every period of Christianity, as doubtless in every the darkest period of every corrupted church, there were individuals who saw and loved the truth, and strove to stay the plague. They were the salt that preserved the dying church from rapid and offensive decay; and had they not been there, fire from above and from below must have swept the doomed nations from the earth, like the Sodom and Gomorrah where no ten just men could be found. Always there were Catholics, who, loving the church as the bride of the Lamb, and as the mother of their souls, endeavored, by whatever efforts, and at whatever peril, to enlighten its dark places, and cleanse it from idolatry. Always there were the simple-minded and good, multitudes we hope, who so passed through their church to heaven. But the work went on, because human nature was battling against the religion which required of it the relinquishment of self and sin. And at length evil had the mastery, and reigned.

In Luther's day, some three centuries ago, occurred what Papists call the great Schism, and Protestants call the Reformation; but to which we can give very readily neither name. It was not a schism or division,

because there was no true church to be divided. And we can call it a reformation, only in so far as it restored the use of the Bible ; because, while it swept away the idolatry of saints and relics, and the delusions of penance, it did not replace in their stead those principles of a true religion which they had expelled, but put there the dreadful doctrine of Salvation by Faith alone. Born long ago, coeval, indeed, with human nature or with the eternal strife between it and religion, the doctrine of Faith alone, the doctrine that if we think and profess what is true, we may do what we will ; the doctrine that belief will suffice as well as practice, that it is as good, nay, that it is better, — now grew into its full stature. The Reformers placed it in the centre of their religion. It stood there with all its deformity undisguised, all its power to wound and slay, unmitigated. It stood there, as the abomination of desolation, in the very sanctuary of the temple.

To those unacquainted with the history of religion, and accustomed to look upon whatever is brought before them with the careless eye of indifference, — which often loves to call itself charity, — this may seem a harsh judgment. But there is evidence enough to justify it, though it would be a mournful task to array the proof in all its woful fulness. Let it suffice now to refer to the horrors of the Anabaptist sway at Munster, and of Antinomianism wherever it threw off

all restraint. If these things are to be regarded as convulsive spasms of falsehood and of sin, from which no general conclusions should be drawn, let us think of Luther's own saying, which is of late years coming into a new celebrity, that "the church must rise and fall with the doctrine of Faith alone;" and of his declaration that "good works could have nothing to do with regeneration, because any works of a man not yet regenerate were bad, and if he were regenerate, then his good works were not needed for an effect already produced;" of Calvin's System of Faith, of the creeds and symbolic books and articles of the Synod of Dort, and other similar ecclesiastical bodies, and even of the articles of the Church of England and the Westminster Catechism. And who can then deny that the doctrine of Salvation by Faith alone is the very essence of Protestant Christianity?

The difficulty of judging aright of the quality and influence of this false doctrine, is increased by another circumstance. The Lord deals with a religion or with a church as with an individual, in this respect, that His infinite love never fails or wearies. Over the evil He watches, to mitigate their evil and its consequences as far as may still be possible. The same divine mercy from which a religion descended, sleeps not as the shades of evening gather about its decline, and still cares for those to whom and for whose good it was

given. He cannot do more to preserve it in its purity, than may be compatible with the preservation of human freedom. But when corruption has stolen upon it, and its truths are perverted, and its good influences changed as the ivy changes the sweet dew and the pure rain into poison, still, His mercy is unchangeable. Then all is done that can be done to lessen the mischief. The falsities are covered, or qualified by admixture with such truth as may yet be possible, so that their deleterious influence is diminished, and the simple seekers after good may be led where they would go, even through these tortuous paths. Hence there has perhaps never been a perversion of religion so absolute and extreme, that it presented itself under no aspect in which the traits of its original beauty could be discerned; nor was there ever a church so falsified that none could go through it to Him from whom it came. Thus the doctrine of salvation by Faith alone, though when seen in its nakedness it is a mere falsehood, and one of profound malignancy, yet, as it is actually taught and preached, it is often, perhaps generally, disguised and ameliorated. Good men, who clung to it because they believed it to be religious truth, have labored to bend and soften it, and connect it with a good life, in such wise as to make it lead towards, instead of from, vital religion; and Divine Providence labored with them. Hence, there are doubtless many who hold this

doctrine, and many it may be hoped who preach it, who would be startled and shocked if they saw it in its true and odious deformity. But with them, whatever they may say and whatever they may think that they believe, faith is not alone. They are rebels, unconscious rebels against the doctrine, and church to which they adhere; because they are faithful to Him against whom that church has rebelled. It is not, therefore, of such as these, or of their necessarily confused and inconsistent doctrines that I speak. But of the bare and undisguised doctrine of salvation by faith alone, as it stands in the authoritative creeds of Orthodox Protestantism, no less can be said, than that it is the repetition of the sacrifice, penance, and idolatry of earlier fallen churches, and, like them, a substitute for the requirements of religion, devised and loved by the corrupt human nature which hates these requirements, and will not hear or obey them. Nor is the whole truth told, until it is added, that this falsehood, not like those of an older time, tangible, sensual, and external, but reigning in the heart,—is even much worse than they.

Immediately around us there is something more than this; there is a kind of Protesting against Protestantism;—and we call it Unitarianism. There are traces of it in many parts of Christendom at this moment; but its chief seat and centre are in our own immediate

neighborhood. It is difficult to speak of this as I should. Early and cherished associations invest it with a charm, which is not diminished by the personal worth of many who profess it. Yet nothing can be clearer than the judgment which must be pronounced upon it, when it is brought to the standard of essential and vital religious truth. It denies and denounces the idolatries of former times as earnestly as Protestantism, and with them the great falsehood which Luther and Calvin substituted for them. But it also denies and disregards that essential element of religion, without which there is no religion. It refuses to give the glory to God. It makes goodness to be man's duty, because man has in himself, and of himself, the full power of goodness. It rests on man, and not on God; its basis is not the constant mercy of the Lord, but "the dignity of human nature."

Here, too, not only all that was said of the way in which the doctrine of Faith alone is tempered and modified, is equally applicable, but a specific distinction may be drawn. The late President Kirkland, a name to be uttered with love and reverence,—and let not the recollection of his meridian brightness be dimmed by the thick and heavy darkness which gathered about his way to death,—said to me, about twenty years ago, in a conversation on this subject; "There are two kinds of Unitarians, and they are very different. There are

some who cannot comprehend the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, and are shocked by that of Faith alone, and therefore deny these doctrines. I am one of these; but I believe there is in the Bible, and in Jesus Christ, and in God's dealings with man, a great mystery which I do not pretend to understand, nor expect to understand, in this world. But there are Unitarians who go much further, and who have a system of faith about all these things which satisfies them, and they think they understand, and that we ought to understand the whole. I do not agree with them." I cannot now give all his very words; but of the substance of his remarks and of much of his language I am very sure; for there were circumstances attending the conversation, and personal applications of it, which fixed it indelibly upon my memory. I have ever since regarded Unitarianism as *negative* with some, and *positive* with others. And we need not look far to find those who, in the midst of its denials, give every evidence of an earnest and constant desire to do all their duty, to cultivate religion in their hearts, and walk humbly before God. But the question, what is positive Unitarianism, remains untouched by such examples.

It is difficult to say any thing of Unitarianism, which may not be rejected at once by one or another of those who profess that system, because it has so little which is distinctly its own. Strictly speaking, a denial of the



Trinity, and a belief in one God, and that Jesus Christ is not that God, is the whole creed of Unitarianism. So much of this as is denial, is intelligible and clear enough ; but that part of it which is belief, may range from the pantheism of Spinoza, through all possible modes of regarding the deity. One thing only appears to be excluded ; and that is a belief in a personal God ; a belief of Him in any sense which can satisfy a clear understanding, and an earnest heart. And yet, this is the very belief which must be regarded as the centre and life of religion. It was to make this belief clear and permanent, that our Father bowed the heavens and walked among men, clothed with our nature, as one of us. It was to justify that belief, and make it eternal as the life of the angels who live by it, that He glorified that human nature and made it divine, even with his own Infinite Divinity. Previous to His coming, the fact that He was to come, was that towards which all prophecy, all hope, all truth, looked. And since his coming, it is in this fact, and in the glorification of His Divine Human, that the whole heavens find the source and seal of their blessedness. This subject we cannot pursue, because it would lead us to that Doctrine of the Lord, which involves all truth as well as all mystery ; which offers to the humblest and simplest mind plain truths, full of guidance, strength, and consolation, and yet grows with the capacity of

comprehension and the sincere love of truth, and connects itself with the loftiest thoughts and all sound knowledge of men and angels, transcending them all, ever stretching upwards to guide the soul in its eternal ascent, ever widening all around to fill the whole horizon of human or angelic consciousness, and glorify the universe of mind and matter with his unbounded presence. The Doctrine of the Lord was revealed in his own Gospels; but tempered there by the clouds with which the Divine mercy moderated its effulgence. In these clouds of heaven, He has now come. He has come in the Spirit; by disclosing the spirit of His Word; by the revelations made from the new heavens for the new earth which is now forming beneath their influence. We can only refer them, who would understand this doctrine, to the works of Swedenborg; here we have but alluded to it, because it would seem that a system of belief which rejects the divinity of the Lord, cannot admit a personal God, and therefore cannot give to Him the glory of all goodness.

It may be asked how it was before Christianity; and the answer is obvious. All nations believed in a personal God, or gods; their temples, idols, statues, traditions, and mythology, prove this belief, and kept it alive. Mingled with a thousand errors, as this heaven-descended truth then was, it was better than nothing, better than utter darkness. Better than a system which

is strictly a system of natural religion ; in other words, a system of religion of the natural man ; in yet other words, a religion which would make man moral by appeals to his pride, and bribe him into goodness by the promise that all the credit, and the merit, and the reward, should be his of right.

As far as we may judge of a system so little defined, and so little capable of definition, we may say that Unitarianism acknowledges God as the source of life and power ; holding that He created man and gave him certain faculties, and laid upon him duties to which those faculties were adequate. Nor is there any thing in this to be condemned as false. But it differs greatly in theory, and far more in influence and effect, from the whole truth. For that tells us, at every moment, that God is with us then ; at every moment creating us ; at every moment giving us his law, writing it upon the willing heart, opening to His Word the willing ear, showing to the willing eye the path of duty, and by his present and continual influence imparting a disposition to obey, with no other limitation or restraint than is necessary to leave us in freedom to choose whom we will serve. The truth tells us, that the same wisdom which prescribes the law, flows with perpetual influx into the mind, and enables it to perceive and understand the law ; that the same love from which the law proceeded, as a means of happiness, flows into the will,

and becomes there, if permitted, a disposition to obey the law and a love of the good for the sake of which the law is given. Therefore, the truth tells us to be humble; to know our own weakness, our own sinfulness; to know whence comes to us any and every disposition to resist evil and do good; to know that this support, this help is ever ready, ever solicitous of entrance, ever uttering those words of mercy: Behold, I stand at the door and knock! But the door of entrance is opened by us, only when in humility, and in sincere acknowledgement of our own nothingness, we turn away from self and towards our ever-present Father. Nor does it seem that feelings like these can be compatible with a system which believes only abstractions, which offers to our worship a being whose infinity is not brought within the reach of human apprehension, and to our love, only the undefined idea of a vast something which made the world, and impressed upon it the laws of nature, and bade it go forth into being and abide its destiny.

The Lord alone is Love, is Life, is Being, in Himself; and all love, and life, and being are derived from him; not once and at their beginning, but always, incessantly, and as the perpetual condition of existence. From the whole heavens, as one man, there goes up without ceasing a voice of praise and of acknowledgment; for every angel, whatever be his occupation or

his blessedness, has deep in his heart a profound conviction and a clear perception, that all which he has of truth or of love is His perpetual gift; and that it is the perpetual giving of Himself. In this conviction and perception lie the foundation and assurance of their blessedness; by them it is measured; and on earth, they indicate the path, the only path to heaven. He who does not learn this truth, and learn to love it here, goes into the other world untaught and unprepared for heaven.

It is not so difficult to lead a moral life, for the lusts and passions, which tempt to sin, are resisted by many selfish and worldly motives; the "laws of nature" rebuke them; and expediency lends to virtue a powerful aid. But a moral life is not enough. If morality only overlies sensuality and selfishness, death rends the veil away. If the devils are cast out by their prince, it is only for his own ends that he does this work. And so too of selfishness. It is easy to resist its grosser temptations. Indeed, it is not easy to indulge them in society; and the avaricious, covetous, and undisguised seekers after their own advantage, without even a seeming regard for their neighbor, are comparatively rare. It is more difficult to resist that measure of selfishness which the customs of society justify, and indeed require of "sensible" men. But there are those who do this. Their life is not passed in seeking or improving oppor-

tunities for personal profit. They give themselves to an exact discharge of duty, to philanthropic services, and the general good. Where, then, is their selfishness? If they do good in the faith and hope that it is God who worketh within them to will and to do, their self-love is subdued, and they are in the way of regeneration. If they do it in their own strength, then has their selfishness retreated into the inner heart. It has become that stubborn, inveterate, and most deadly selfishness, which is ready to sell all that it has, and take its pay in self-complacency, and in the consciousness of its own generosity, and its own merit. If, therefore, the first question is, whether the life be good, a great question still lies behind; and that regards the quality and origin of the goodness. In this respect the constant habit of sincere acknowledgement, that all our goodness is from its only source, becomes unspeakably important. We cannot day by day, hour by hour, and at every moment, offer up to God a polluted sacrifice. If we begin by shunning evils, because they involve loss of honor, or property, or pleasure, we shall gradually reach the higher state, in which we resist them as sins against Him, if we continually confess that the power of resistance comes from Him. Then our evil tendencies are not merely silenced and disguised, but suppressed; and when we reach a world where hypocrisy is impossible, we shall be welcomed by those who

have already aided us in the work of regeneration ; and they will join us in the eternal endeavor to complete that work. But the perception and acknowledgement which are needed for this result must be difficult, not to say impossible, where there is a studied and constant rejection of that work of Divine mercy, of which it was a principal object to make that perception and acknowledgment possible and effectual.

I cannot leave this topic without confessing that its weight and solemnity oppress me. I feel painfully my inability to comprehend it in its true worth, and the inadequacy of my words to present it even as I perceive it. What else is it than the life of heaven ? To receive from the Lord of His Love and Wisdom, and to render them again to Him in acknowledgment and in love, these two, as one, constitute all there is in heaven of life and joy, and all there is on earth of heaven. We have in this an unfailing and universal standard of character. It measures the bliss of the archangel nearest the throne ; and through all the realms of heaven, down to this lower world, and in all the stages of progress here, the same unerring test is applicable. We have the command to love the Lord our God with all our soul and all our strength, and to love our neighbor as ourselves. We may view this as a command, but we shall err if we look upon it as the command of one who stands aloof, content with pro-

mulgating his law. It is not so. The same Divine Love which uttered those words, is ever striving to enter into our wills, and become the very love which these words require. And these words should teach us, that there is no genuine love of the neighbor which is not derived from and filled with a love to the Lord. If we would have and cultivate in ourselves that love of the neighbor which is the beginning of heaven, and which binds all in heaven into oneness, with the cords of love, we must endeavor, first, most, and always, to have and cultivate in ourselves a love to the Lord. There are those, and it may be hoped there are many, whose denial of Him is only an ignorance of the truth and a denial of the false; or, so far as it is a denial of the truth, it is of the lips only, and not of the heart. But woe to the heart upon which falls the withering, blasting touch of Actual Wilful Denial. For him, our Lord and Father came down to earth in vain; for him He comes again in the Spirit, in His Word, in all the influences which breathe from His heavens, in all the providences which gather about our cradle, and watch our going forth and coming in through all the ways of life, and hover on angels' wings over the last struggles of mortality, — all, all in vain.

The New Jerusalem differs from the churches which have preceded it, not in declaring that man must be good and give the glory of his goodness to God. For



this has been the constant declaration of all true religion. But this truth is now revealed with far more of its original splendor. It stands now, not isolated; not claiming its own department of thought and of affection, and leaving broad realms of knowledge and of motive independent and uninfluenced. But it is revealed as the centre of a system of universal truth. When it shall prevail among men, religion will be at once the whole earth on which man stands, the sky which holds all being in its wide embrace, and the sun whose winged messengers of heat and light fill earth and sky with life and beauty. From it will proceed principles which will lead to all possible improvement of the will or the understanding; and science, and art, and virtue, and happiness, will come back to it with their willing homage. The prophecies of the Scriptures, which tell us that when Jerusalem is restored, all nations will flock thither with their riches and their glory, and that all the kings of the earth will bring to her their tribute, mean precisely this. And Jerusalem, the city of God, is now rebuilding; or, in the only appropriate words, "That great city, the holy Jerusalem, is descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; for the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing which defileth, or worketh abomination, or a lie; but they which are written in the Lamb's Book of Life."

## THE NEW JERUSALEM.

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IF I have succeeded in giving to the readers of the preceding Essays any idea of the doctrine of Degrees, — of the three degrees which belong to all existence, because primarily in the Source of all existence, — it will be easier for me to illustrate the character and office of the New Church, by a reference to the churches which have immediately preceded it. There is a distinct relation between this Church, the First Christian Church, and the Jewish Church, which being understood, illustrates them all.

The Jewish Church was established in Judea, and Jerusalem was its capital and head, its Holy City. It was there, also, that our Lord was born in the humanity which He assumed; there His earthly life was passed, His miracles wrought, and His instruction given; and from Jerusalem, as a centre, came forth the Christian religion. The Apocalypse of St. John, which

relates, in its spiritual sense, the decline and death of the First Christian Church, and the birth and establishment of the Second, describes this as a "New Jerusalem." Thus, these three churches have this point in common; they all refer, in one way or another, to the Holy City of Judea.

Let us endeavor to explain this; and, beginning with the remark that the object of all religion, and therefore of every church, is to inculcate and produce goodness, we may infer that one way to comprehend the character of a church, is to determine the character of the goodness it seeks to teach and to confirm.

Now all the various kinds of goodness, which differ among individuals indefinitely, may be classed under three heads; or, in other words, there are three generic kinds of goodness, which form a regular series, being successive in their order of development, and in the degree of their elevation; and these three are entirely distinct, one from the other. In the works of Swedenborg, and in the language of the New Church generally, these three are called, as has been said in former Essays, natural good, spiritual good, and celestial or heavenly good.

Natural good is the first and lowest form of goodness. It is the good of external life only. It is such good as a man *may* do without religion, or such as he may do when moved by the terrors or the hopes of a

religion which does not leave the earth. This was the good of the Jewish Church. In many of the passages in which Swedenborg speaks of the Jews, he uses the phrase Jewish or Israelitish Church; but in most of them he denies that it was a church, and calls it merely the representative of a church. It was, in fact, a church, or not a church, according to the aspect under which it is viewed; precisely as natural good is or is not *good*, according to its origin, character, and effect. He who obeys the laws of God and of man, merely from a refined selfishness, may lead a life of entire external good; and in speaking of it under some points of view, we may call his life a good life. Yet there is no genuine goodness in him; and his life, accurately speaking, is only the form, the representative of a good life. Just so it was with the Jewish Church. It was the exact representative of a perfect church. Its foundation was, in the first place, the ten commandments, which prohibit all evil; and in the next place, the ritual law. The rites and ceremonies of the Jews, their tabernacle and temple, and all things that belong to the observances of their worship, and the facts of their history as related in the Bible, were representative. That is, they indicated some things true or good, some things of a moral quality, some things of internal life, which were requisite to the complete expulsion of evil and establishment of good; or, in other words, to

the complete regeneration of a man; or, in yet other words of the same meaning, to the formation of a true church within a man. Hence they are, in their spiritual sense, of eternal obligation; and therefore our Lord said: "Verily I say unto you, no jot or tittle of the law shall pass away."

But the Jews were unacquainted with the meaning and purpose of the things they were commanded to do; for if they had known what lay within them, their character was such that they would have profaned them. From such a nation no other church could be formed than a merely natural church; and thus they were exhorted to obey on merely natural, earthly grounds. The motives held out to them were all from this side of the grave; to their eyes no light from the life beyond its dark precincts streamed across the gloom. Bread and oil and wine, earthly dominion, prosperity and peace, were all that were promised them; and captivity, pestilence, and famine all that were threatened; and this, too, was because higher motives would not have suited a people capable only of merely natural good. The dominion, prosperity, and peace; the bread, the oil, and the wine; the captivity, the plague, and the famine, which allured or terrified them, and which did indeed reward and punish them; and the Holy City, which was the centre of their worship and national existence,—all had infinitely higher meanings than they knew of; but their literal,

earthly senses were all that were suited to the Jewish mind, because that was a merely natural mind.

We may thus understand what is meant by the repeated declaration, that the Jews were "a chosen people." Good men, in every age, have been disturbed and pained, that such a people as the children of Israel should have been "chosen" of God as the object of His peculiar favor. But it is now made known *for what* they were chosen. It was for a use which required a peculiar people, but not a peculiarly good people; nor were any peculiar favors intended for them or granted to them. They were, by hereditary character, a singularly *natural* people; or, as it may be otherwise expressed, a singularly *external* people. They were less disposed than any other to see or know, or wish to know, or be moved and influenced by, truths which were more than sensual. Their character was earthly, and altogether earthly. They alone among men had a religion given them, entirely, or with few exceptions, without spiritual sanctions; and it was no harm to them, but their greatest good, because they were incapable of receiving any thing more. The precepts of religion, armed with the terrors and promises which they could feel, protected them, as far as possible, from the evils of idolatry, and required of them that external goodness of which alone they were capable.

The land of Canaan, which was to become the Holy Land, was at that time filled with nations or tribes of the most depraved character. There, the Philistines and others, represented, in their ruling affections and the principles of their life, (and signify, wherever mentioned in the Word) those principles hostile to all good, which infest the natural man. These must be extirpated, before genuine good can be received into the heart and life. These nations, therefore, the Jews were commanded to attack and destroy with merciless severity; for this formed a part of the representative and significant history of this representative of a church. The savage cruelty of the Jews was permitted, because it was their natural disposition. It was not checked, because so far as the Jews were concerned, it could not have been without doing violence to that freedom which is always regarded by Divine Providence. So far as the heathen were concerned, they had reached a fulness of wickedness, which made it well that they should cumber the earth no longer. So far as the whole race of man and the whole future were concerned, a series of facts thus took place *externally*, which being recorded by inspiration, describe the eternal conflict between good and evil, and, in their spiritual meaning, give, with infinite fulness and detail, instructions to all who tread or ever shall tread the painful path, the strait and narrow way of regeneration.

For all these purposes the Jews were "a peculiar people, chosen of the Lord." And they were chosen because they could perform these uses, without injury to themselves, while at the same time they were brought under the influence of a religion better suited to them than any other which could be given.

God is Infinite; and in all His Providence hath respect to the Eternal; and the religion thus given to the Jews, and in its external form thus adapted to them, has in its bosom truth and good for far higher states and qualities; even for the highest. It is, therefore, an infinite and everlasting religion; and the Scriptures which contain it, are the Word of God. In whatever stage of being they are who seek His face, to these Scriptures they go as the panting hart to the water-brooks, and find there the ever-flowing river of life. They who are highest among the angels of His presence, who in their purity, and wisdom, and love, are nearest Him, find their intenser light and their most fervent love kindled and fed by the same Word which comes down to our dark earth, to teach the ignorant, to heal those sick with sin, and bind up the broken heart.

When the Jewish Church had come to the time of its end, our Lord, whose name is Emanuel, God with us, came down to earth in a new way and form; He assumed our nature, was born of a virgin, lived and



taught and did the works of God among men ; and by His divine life on earth, and by His Gospels, which were written under His full inspiration, He established Christianity.

I endeavored to explain the Jewish Church, by showing that it inculcated natural good. To explain the First Christian Church, we must consider the nature of spiritual good.

He who begins the work of improvement, begins by obeying. He learns the laws of religion, sees what things they prohibit, and them he avoids ; and what things they require, and them he endeavors to do. To this obedience he is moved, according to his character, by various motives. But he makes a step decidedly in advance of the first or lowest, when he seeks to know what is right, and to do what is right ; because he loves to know and to do the truth. For this is a step towards spiritual good. He might have acted before, just as he acts now. Fear, or hope may have led him to a perfect obedience, and if the fear which moved him was the fear of God, it was the beginning of wisdom. But if he before avoided the evils which beset him, because God would punish them, and now avoids them because the truth tells him that they are sins against God, though his outward life be not altered, yet has he become a better man. From one good he has advanced to a higher good. From a natural man he has become, or is becoming, a spiritual man.

The First Christian Church was a Spiritual Church. The first miracle which our Lord wrought was declaratory and descriptive of the change from the one church to the other. This was the miracle wrought at the marriage in Cana of Galilee, recorded in the second chapter of John. Water, wine, and oil, signify throughout the Scriptures, natural truth, and spiritual truth, and heavenly truth. Had I space, it might be interesting to illustrate the grounds and character of this correspondence, and its bearing upon the natural qualities and uses of these substances; but I must content myself with stating it. At this marriage, wine being wanting, our Lord took the vessels filled with water, "*after the manner of the purifying of the Jews,*" and converted the water into wine. Thus He began his work by doing symbolically, what the whole work was intended to effect, so far as it related to the First Christian Church. He did the same thing, when he said: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment; but I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment; and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire. Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that

thy brother hath aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Here, too, by these words, and all similar words, he converted the water of purification of the Jews into the wine of Christianity.

It was said, that he who is in natural good may not alter his life when he comes into spiritual good. This is possible; because *perfect* natural good is a perfect external. But it is, nevertheless, true, that the higher motives of spiritual good open the mind to higher and clearer truths. They supply us with more universal principles of conduct; with rules of life which rest upon a basis at once broader and firmer, and which enable us to detect and to resist the promptings of evil in their more obscure and insidious forms, and therefore they have far greater power over the life. The difference between the instruction and commands of the Old Testament and of the New Testament, may serve to illustrate this. In general, it may be stated that while the Law delivered to the Jews prohibits, in its literal sense, all sinful acts, the law of Christ forbids every look, or thought, or feeling which may lead to sin.

But if spiritual good be far more than natural good, there is yet something higher, far higher than this; and it is heavenly good. Obedience to the Divine

Law is good, if it be sincere, however low may be the motive which prompts that obedience. And an endeavor to conform to the truth from a love of the truth, is still better, and it opens the heart to still higher influences. Better yet, and best of all, is the doing good from the love of good. When this is the established condition of the mind, there is no more of effort, no more of conflict; for in their stead has come the peace of God. In the wholly unregenerate man, impulses to evil, wrongful desires, selfish motives and lusts, compose the web and woof of life. With them he contends when he endeavors to obey the commandments; and if he advances so far as to resist them from a love of the truth which forbids them, from a sense of right, the conflict is yet more severe. That truth upon which he calls reveals to him more of himself; it shows him daily, and hourly, that self is an ever-present foe, wearing every disguise, calling itself by every name, assuming the voice of every virtue. If he be faithful to the better influences which guide him upwards, his warfare is incessant; whether hope and joy bring upon the mind the brightness of day, or sorrow and humiliation cover him with darkness, he must still be watchful and steadfast against an enemy whose name is legion. But, if this warfare be accomplished, if the victory be won, that enemy retreats and is silent and powerless. Then is the good which the truth requires, loved for

its own sake; he need no longer call upon his reason to control his will, for his will itself is regenerated, and while he does only what he loves to do, he leads a life of purity and safety. The innocence of infancy has come back filled with the wisdom of maturity, and with the blessedness of them who see their Father's face.

Such is heavenly good. To be imagined here, and that but faintly; to be seen only above. Earth is as yet too full of evil to become the abode of happiness like this. And yet this is the end to which all goodness would lead, towards which it strives.

As there are three distinct kinds of good, so, as I have already said, there are three heavens. In the one, are those who in this life rose no further than to seek and know the good of an honest obedience, and this is called by Swedenborg the natural heaven. In the next, are they who have ascended so far as to love the truth of God's words, and sincerely endeavor to obey them; and this is the spiritual heaven. In the third and highest, from which, or rather through which from the Lord, the others derive all life and happiness, are they who love, earnestly and sincerely love, the good which His law inculcates, and deplore the opposing evils within them as their worst enemies and sorest pains; and this is the heavenly or celestial heaven. They are in it,—not who have completed the work

they had begun on earth — but who have so learnt to love good and to hate evil, that they have entered upon this eternal path.

Having stated that the good of the Jewish Church is natural good; while that of the First Christian Church is spiritual good; I may now add, that the good of the Second Christian Church, called in the Word the New Jerusalem, is heavenly good.

It should be remarked that the Jewish Scriptures, or the books of the Old Testament — the Law and the Prophets — do indeed teach and inculcate all good and the highest good. This they do everywhere in the spiritual and heavenly senses; and not unfrequently in the literal sense of passages where the internal senses come to the surface, and the letter is translucent, and shines with their light. But nevertheless, as a whole, it taught to the Jews and required of them only natural good. They might well have believed, — and they now whose minds adhere exclusively to the literal sense of those Scriptures, may believe, — that natural goodness, or mere obedience, fulfils their law.

So of the Gospels. In their literal sense they sometimes command and enforce the highest good. Where our Lord tells His disciples to love the Lord with the whole heart and the neighbor as one's self, He laid bare the inmost secret of the heavens. But as a whole it is still true, that it teaches and requires only spiritual

good. It appealed to motives far higher than belonged to the Jewish dispensation ; it placed the eternal above the transient ; it drew its sanctions from that other life which it brought forth to view ; but, it is still true, that in its literal sense, it makes religion rest upon the basis of reward and punishment. The New Church has the same Scriptures. The Word of God is hers as it was theirs, and more, far more. She clings to the literal sense as the law of life, as the foundation on which the very heavens rest ; but the Word is transfigured before her, and its face shineth as the sun ; for to her are given also the spiritual and heavenly senses, and in them she finds only Love.

To illustrate this position at any length, would require an examination of all religious doctrines ; for there is no one of them which is not presented now as it has never been before. But to do this work, or any large portion of it, now, is obviously impossible. And even if I selected but one, if it were of sufficient worth and significance to illustrate the whole, wider space and a very different mode of treatment would be requisite to do it justice. And yet, as all that I can do, I will endeavor to present a very few of the doctrines which are deemed central in all religions, somewhat as they are viewed in the New Church. For this purpose I will select — The Doctrine of the Lord, and The Doctrine of Forgiveness of Sins, and of Rewards and Punishments.

Among heathen nations, the idea of God was and is very obscure. Idolatry of some kind was and is universal; and the popular belief generally regards God as a mighty man, subject in a greater or less degree to human passions and infirmities. In ancient times, there probably prevailed among most nations a distinction similar to that which we know to have existed in Egypt, and in the earlier philosophies, and in the Eleusinian and other mysteries; that is, a distinction between the inner and the outer doctrine, between that which was secret and that which was published. And there are traces of very just and clear ideas of the Godhead, to be found in the fragmentary records of most of the earlier religions. But to the children of Israel, Jehovah was revealed. He stood before them, defined and illustrated by His own Word. Still, only the letter of that Word was for them; and that letter represents him as a jealous God, avenging iniquity, uttering terrible threats, and true to His promise of punishment. Clouds and darkness were round about him. In the literal sense of the Gospels, these features are softened. God is there represented as our Father in heaven, who loveth all, and maketh His sun to rise and His rain to fall upon the good and the wicked. Still He calls upon men to be good, that they may escape the worm that never dies, the fires that are never quenched. The suffering Lazarus may hope to



rest upon Abraham's bosom when the rich man is tormented in hell. It is still, as it was before, a religion based upon promises and threats ; and they are but the more powerful because they are drawn from a life that knows no end, but the more awful because they mingle with the shadows of the valley of death. This was as near an approach to the truth, or rather it was the truth as little veiled, as was good for that age and church. In the New Jerusalem, the Lord is revealed as Love alone. In His essence immutable, but in His manifestation and in His operation exquisitely accommodated to the wants and capabilities of all races, ages, and individuals.

The idolatry of the world had reached an extreme in the days of Moses, which required the establishment of a religion among men which should declare most distinctly and most emphatically the Unity and Spirituality of God, and surround this central truth with the most powerful sanctions. But at the close of the Jewish Church, the powers of hell had gained such an ascendancy upon earth, that even within the shadow of the temple of the Most High, they could take possession of the very bodies of men. Death was at war with life, and gaining the victory. The destruction of the race, soul and body, was impending ; and to meet this great exigency, and avert more terrible calamities than had ever fallen upon mankind, our Father in

heaven assumed our nature, and dwelt on earth as a man among men. And not for this cause only. In the condition of the Jews and of mankind at that period, a reason may be found for the precise time of the occurrence of this infinite event. But its effect, its good was also infinite and universal. Having assumed our nature by being born of woman, he had therewith all the tendencies to sin, which, by a lengthened inheritance, had, in the fulness of time, filled and composed that nature. These tendencies, all the evil influences of all the hells were permitted to awake and excite: "He was tempted as we are tempted;" but never sinned, and always by His Divine power overcame all evil, and thus so reduced into obedience and subjection the powers of hell, that the powers of heaven again brought man into freedom, and gave to him full power of turning whither he would; — of rising or of falling. And this was the great Act of Redemption.

These victories over evil were perfect and were constant. The Gospels speak only of the temptations in the wilderness, in the garden, and on the cross. These are themselves true, and are symbols of the rest. For His life on earth, from the cradle to the cross, was one incessant and profound temptation, one constant, perfect victory. By this victory evil was expelled from His human nature; as it passed away, good from the Divine within, took its place, and thus,

by a gradual process, the external was made one with the internal, the human was made divine; and in this Divine Humanity He dwells forever.

We are commanded to follow Him in our regeneration; because the regeneration of man must be an image of the glorification of our Lord's humanity. It can be effected only in the same way; only by the resisting of evil through the strength of God within. But with man, it can go no further than regeneration, nor can that work be perfect; in our Lord Jesus Christ the work proceeded until the human became absolutely divine, absolutely one with the Divine within. To this result this work cannot go with man; but in this direction it must go; and at every step the Lord is with us. Because tempted as we, tempted as the whole human race ever were or ever can be, — He walks with every man in the darkest paths of danger and distress, and from the treasures of His own Divine Human experience, gives always and to all who will receive, sympathy, and help, and the bread of life. For He is Perfect God and He is Perfect Man.

“Philip saith unto him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?” And how else could the Father be seen but in the Son,

and as the Son presented Him to view? It is written that no man can see God and live. And it is plain that no man, no finite perception can be adequate to the perception or comprehension of His unaccommodated Infinity. But that He might be seen and known among men, He came and dwelt with us, speaking as no man ever spake, doing the works which no man ever did. And now He has come in the revelations which disclose the inner truth and good, the wisdom and the love, of His works and words. They may now be seen in the light of heaven; in their own light. And they are thus seen to be divine and infinite; ever opening new wisdom as the mind forever expands to comprehend it, ever wider and warmer in their love as the heart grows larger to receive it. It may be now seen, that to the thirsty and to him perishing with hunger, they offer the water and the bread of life, while to angelic life in its highest exaltation, they give support and nutriment and the means of eternal progress.

The mystery of a Divine Humanity is great. But we are not left without a key that may unlock it. In the Gospels our Lord speaks often, as if other than the Father, and far from the Father. He prays to Him for strength; he calls upon Him in agony. But often also he speaks of Himself as one with the Father; as the Father Himself. There is a seeming contradiction

in this; a mystery which it is hard to fathom. But these different words were uttered in the course of that glorification, of which all regeneration is an image and in all regeneration there is also an image of the same contradiction, the same mystery.

No man can begin this great work without discovering that his external nature resists his internal nature, and must be made to obey if there is to be reform. Thus he finds that he is, as it were, two men; one external, one internal. In the external man there are lusts, passions, selfishness; and in the internal man there is reason, and conscience, and religious principle; and these rebuke the former. Sometimes, in moments of struggle and resolute resistance to urgent temptation, the conflict is as great as it could be between any two parties. The external man feels the excitement and seduction of the evil which tempts, and feels also its own weakness; and calls earnestly upon the internal man, upon the conscience and the reason and the religion within, to awake and save. If they do awake and save, if the temptation be overcome, that disposition to evil is weakened and suppressed; the conflict terminates; in its stead there is, at least for a season, peace and tranquillity; the external is glad that it chose good rather than evil; the internal is glad that the truth and right prevailed; and in their gladness and peace they are one. In this separation and con-

flict on the one hand, and in this conjunction and unity on the other, we have an image of the two states of the Lord. It is a very exact image, because it is the very effect, and, as it may be called, the reproduction of the Lord's experience. Infinitely less in degree, it is, nevertheless, a true image in its own degree, and therefore the less is explanatory of the greater. So is it, also, even to the end. With the Lord, that end was the perfect glorification of the Human, which was thus made perfectly divine. With man, it is only that measure of regeneration to which he may attain. But this regeneration consists of the unity of the internal man and the external man in good. Just so far as this goes, just so far there is peace; just so far there is an absence of all the elements and causes of conflict; just so far there is good within, in the form of truth and excellent desires and purposes, and without, in the form of good conduct and a pure life. This good, descending from God into the inmost of the mind, and thence coming forth into goodness of life, is one throughout its course; and unites into one man the external and internal, which evil had divided, and conjoins this man with the Source of Good. Then is His will done in earth as in heaven; in the earth, or lower and visible regions of the mind and life, as in their heavens. Then is the sabbath of the soul. We are no longer led into temptation, but delivered from evil without tempta-

tion, because we have given ourselves up to God, and the kingdom, the power, and the glory are His alone. Hitherto, the Lord has labored with us and within us, through the six days of our internal creation, from the first hour when His Spirit brooded over the heaving waters, to that in which man was made in His image and likeness. Now He rests from His labors ; not that His life-giving influence and operation ceases, but it is no longer a labor, because it is no longer opposed and resisted ; and He hallows this day.

As the First Christian Church adopted and embraced the Jewish Scriptures, so the New Jerusalem embraces these two churches, and all other forms and modes of truth and good. Considered in reference to them, she has her distinctive principles ; but these are not exclusive of theirs, nor opposed to them. All modes and all degrees of goodness will find her their nursing-mother. Earnestly desirous to lift up all to the highest plane of spiritual life, she still offers her hand, her help, her light, her love, to all upon the lowest step of the ladder of life, whose faces are turned upward by the wish to ascend.

In no true doctrine of the Lord is there found any thing of vengeance, any thing of offended mercy, any thing of punishment to satisfy the demands of vindictive justice ; nor is aught else found there but love. Not the heavens only, but earth and hell are pervaded,

penetrated, and governed by this essential element of the Divine Being.

Religion has, hitherto, required obedience under the threat of punishment. The degree and nature of this punishment, and the means of avoiding it, have been very variously presented, and have constituted some of the principal differences between religions. Mistakes and perversions, on this point, have led to infinitely diversified forms of idolatry and penance; but differ as they might, they agreed in this, that they were viewed as means of propitiating an angry God. The literal sense of the Gospels, in many passages, calls us to repentance and reform, that we may flee from a wrath to come. This view of the relation between God and man may be characterized, not as false, but as imperfect and partial; and yet as the highest and purest for which mankind was prepared; as that which they required to turn them from evil, because it was more powerful than any thing else which could be presented to them. In taking this view of it, we must be careful not to confound the truth as it was accommodated by Providence to men, with the direful perversions of it wrought by sin and foolishness. There was nothing in any revelation, or in any dealing of God with men, which ever justified the terrible idolatries of earlier ages, or the milder idolatry which has made Roman Catholicism but a new form of heathen-



ism ; or the doctrine of Protestantism, that one person of a Divine Trinity suffered infinite punishment to satisfy another divine person, and that faith in the sufferer imputes to the believer his righteousness, and imparts the benefits of his satisfaction. These are men's devices, not God's gifts. From the day of that Nicene Council, says Swedenborg, which established over the Christian church a tripersonal Trinity and the doctrine of imputative Faith, the corruption and decay of the Christian church began.

And yet the New Church teaches that there is a Hell, as there is a Heaven ; or, rather, many hells and many heavens. But as heaven is not a reward, so neither is hell a punishment. Both are the free, unfettered choice of those who have them. Both are the modes of life, which they who lead them love. Both are the modes of life, to which the character and will formed here lead. Both are the growth of the seed that is sown in the fields of life.

The very effort to state in few words a doctrine like this, to the elucidation of which a volume might well be devoted, is somewhat embarrassing. But I will endeavor to do this.

God is Love. He therefore seeks to give to His children the best thing He can give or they can receive. This best thing is the free love of good ; for from this flows His own perfect blessedness and all

inferior happiness. It must be *free*; this is the primal and continual condition; for take from *love* the idea of *freedom*, and you take away its essence, and its life. If *free*, that is, if man is free to receive it, he must be free to reject it. And, therefore, some do receive it, and some do reject it. They who receive it, find it the source of all blessing, and are in heaven, and are angels. They who reject it, choose in its stead the love of self and of evil; and they are in hell, and are devils. But are they, then, without the infinite mercy of God? Not so; not so in the least degree. They are permitted to live as they love to live; they are allowed the delights they desire; with no other qualification, no other restraint, than is necessary to prevent their making each other more miserable. They wish to do this, and they are prevented. Never punished for the sins they have committed here, and never punished for their love of a sinful life, because punishment for these causes must now be ineffectual, they are punished only as it becomes necessary to prevent their molesting and tormenting each other. They are still the objects of His constant care and mercy; of a love so vast, that no sin can exhaust it; so pure and perfect, that no created mind can for a single moment imagine it.

The worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched, are not literal torments. Nor are they conscience and remorse, and a sense of their condition;

for their conscience is suffocated; they cannot feel remorse, and their condition is precisely what they love. The worm and the fire are their lusts and evil affections; these are not permitted to die, or be extinguished, because they are their life, their joy, and the only life and only joy of which they are capable. They are in their heaven; in the only heaven they can appreciate, or desire, or imagine, or enjoy.

The Lord condemns no one. He who occupies a place in hell, seeks that place because it is suited to his life; and he is permitted to occupy it, by the mercy which provides for him all the means of happiness he may enjoy, and protects him as far as possible from suffering. No one goes to hell whom the Lord can preserve from it, consistently with the man's own freedom. No one goes there, who has not so resisted the divine influence as to have confirmed himself in the evils which that influence resists. Hence we may understand one delightful doctrine of this church. It assures us that all who die in infancy and childhood, become angels. At their tender age, and before the full development of reason, they could not extinguish its light, or seal their hearts against the entrance of mercy. They arise from the dead body, still infants, or children; and grow to maturity in that world as in this; and during that growth are nursed, and educated, and prepared for heaven. Yes, the babe who dies

upon his mother's breast, wakes in the arms of an angel-mother, and never learns the sad lessons which, in the world he has left, so soon soil the opening blossoms of life. The beloved child, that leaves the circle his innocent happiness filled with gladness, forgets not in his new home his sweet smile ; all beautiful things cluster around him, and his soft bright eye reflects their beauty ; and the lovely brow where joy and hope sat together, expands into the fulness of manhood, unruffled and unstained.

There is yet another doctrine connected with this subject, which may be mentioned. None, or very few, go from this world altogether good or evil. The best man carries with him some false persuasions, some dispositions to evil, not yet suppressed. The worst man conceals his depravity from the world, and perhaps from himself, by many false pretences. From this inconsistency there comes conflict. It is well for both classes that they should be better prepared for their final destiny. For this purpose they pass a time, which varies greatly with different persons, in a state which is intermediate between heaven and hell. Into this men enter at once, upon rising from the dead body. As they carry with them their common thoughts and affections, they are at first surrounded by a world quite similar, in all particulars, to that they leave, so that they scarcely perceive the difference. And the reason

has already been suggested ; it is, that spiritual substance yields perfectly and constantly to the plastic power of the internal. It becomes a surrounding world into which the life of man flows forth and is received. It becomes a world of external forms which correspond to and represent the powers and states of thought and feeling in the internal man. In that world they are instructed and disciplined ; not, as upon earth, for the purpose of changing the ruling principles of the character, but to develop, confirm, and liberate them from opposing qualities. While this discipline is going on, they are neither angels nor devils, but good or bad spirits. They are said by Swedenborg to be in the "World of Spirits." A very large proportion of his relations of things heard and seen by him when his spiritual senses were opened, relate to this world, and describe its scenes, and doings, and inhabitants ; and must be referred to these, and not to the permanent and abiding life or homes either of the blessed or the unhappy ; of heaven or of hell.

Let me now speak of the different evidence on which the three Churches I have considered, rest ; for the difference in this evidence grows directly from the essential difference between them, which has been already stated.

The Jews were an external people. Among them

an external church, or the external of a true church, was to be founded ; and as its witnesses, all the visible powers of the elements were summoned. The plagues of Egypt; the terrors and the consolations, and the miracles of fear and mercy which attended the forty years of wandering; the trumpet voices, the thunders and lightnings, and earthquake, and thick smoke of Sinai; these were the appropriate witnesses that Jehovah had come down; and through the eyes and ears of that people, they endeavored to reach their hearts.

Next comes a true, a spiritual church, intended for spiritual men. It was far higher than the other, as long as that other was understood only in its literal sense, because it was, in fact, a revelation of a sense which lay within that letter. It calls upon men to obey the truth; to compel their lusts to be silent before the voice of truth, the sense of right. It awakens, instructs, and invigorates that sense of right, to which it appeals. What, therefore, are the appropriate evidences of this religion? They are such as may convince and persuade; but they do not come clothed with terror, or with angry power. They were not thunder and lightning, nor earthquakes, nor trumpet tones pealing from the horrors of thick darkness, nor destruction in any form. But they were miracles of love, of power exhibiting itself in mercy. They were words of a higher authority than ever before spake

with human utterance. They were works which, with calm omnipotence, confronted hell and bade the devils flee, and the stormy soul and the stormy sea be still. They were works and words of the very utmost power as evidence ; but of none as threat or earthly terror. They were all that his mind could ask or can ask now, who seeks only a reason for his faith, sincerely willing to see that reason, devoutly willing to cherish and obey that faith which it illustrates and confirms.

Again, another church, a New Church, is to be established, and the former has passed away. It appeals, not to the mind of man, but to his heart ; or rather, not to the mind first, but to the affections, and through them to the mind. It awakes, invigorates, and purifies all the love he has for good ; it offers to make this more ; to guide it, to gratify it, to bless it. And what is its evidence ? If we remember that it appeals only to the love of being good, and the hatred of self and sin, and only where there is this love and this hatred can it be present, only to them can it speak, we shall see that it could not possibly admit of any other evidence than the fact that it is able to strengthen and illuminate the affections and principles to which it appeals. In other words, any evidence other than the perception of its reality and its powers, would be no evidence to them to whom it comes ; no evidence to help forward the work which it comes to do. Here, on

its own ground, its evidence is plenary and perfect. He who seeks this Church for any other purpose than to become better and wiser than he is, seeks it for a purpose which does not belong to it, but is without and below its sphere. He who seeks it for this purpose, finds in its every word that which he seeks. It reveals to him the true relation of God to man, of heaven to earth. It opens the mysteries of life, and glorifies duty into love. It shows him whence goodness is, and what it is, and pours the light of a revealed wisdom upon its long pathway from the source of good, through all the heavens, filling them with light and joy, through the mind of man, bringing that into oneness with the heavens, through the realms of nature, coming forth as the laws of the material universe, and forming all things into shapes which mirror its higher creations in the universe of spirit. His eye is opened by his wish to see; and in the instinct of animals, the growth of plants, the energies, and forces, and forms of matter, he sees the One Life, which seeks to fill his own heart with itself, that he may be one with the whole, and rest forever under the brooding wings of Universal Love. His ear is opened by the wish to hear; he listens to that Hymn of praise, which all the voices of nature are ever singing, which mingles with the sweetest tones of the heart, and is in harmony with the music ever sounding from all the spheres of being.



What, to him, would be the Sinai of the Jews? What, to him, a miracle which opened the eye or the ear of a disordered frame? Miracles as much above these as the soul is above the body, are all around him, ever before him; and well he knows that they are ever pressing to repeat themselves, upon his own eye, and ear, and heart.

It may be useful to remark that the appropriate evidence of any dispensation, is necessarily ineffectual and insufficient with those who are able to judge of it only in the spirit of one that has passed by. Thus the Jews expected their Messiah with an intensity of hope which has no parallel in the history of mankind. Yet, when he came, they rejected him and crucified him. It was because they supposed that his reign would be but a restoration and confirmation of former glories. They expected from him dominion and prosperity like that of their early kings, increased a thousandfold. And therefore they looked for magnificent displays of power as the first signal of his presence. They thought that the wonders of Sinai would be repeated with augmented splendor; that the advent of Shiloh would convulse the world. Wofully were they mistaken. At this distance we wonder at their obstinate incredulity. We think they resisted the force of evidence, which, to an open mind, would have come with resistless power. But

we judge of this in our own mood and not in theirs; they saw and disbelieved, because they were Jews, and Jews only.

The very same thing is repeating itself now. Perhaps the most common remark respecting the New Church, is that which denies its reality, because a dispensation of Divine Truth can be proved only by miracles, and must therefore be proved by them, and this Revelation appeals to no such testimony. If, instead of this, it were said that every Revelation must be established by sufficient evidence, this would be true. And the next step for a fair and rational mind would be to the conclusion that the evidence of every Revelation must be specifically appropriate to that, and to no other. This results not from Divine order only, but from Divine mercy. They who are so thoroughly imbued with the spirit of a church that is passing away, that the dispensation which comes to take its place must needs be nothing to them, are protected by the very feeling which prompts them to demand a repetition of the evidence, which was once appropriate and is not now. This is a general law; and its application to the New Church admits of many illustrations. Look at the effect of miracles upon the mind. Those of Sinai overwhelm it and beat down all resistance. Those which attended the First Christian Church were of a milder character, but still they *compel* belief. It is this

circumstance which not only makes them inappropriate but would render them injurious at the present epoch. The New Church can be received only in freedom, and with the full and deliberate assent of the reason. It can be seen only by its own light. That desire for moral and spiritual purification to which it appeals, permits and prompts the reason to investigate its claims, and perceive its means of purifying the heart and elevating the mind. If there be this perception, no other evidence is wanting ; or, rather, external evidence would be injurious, because it would prevent the wholesome discipline of investigating and adopting the truth for the sake of the good to which it leads. And where there are not this desire and the perception that springs from it, miracles would be the more injurious, because they would compel the belief of truths which would afterwards be neglected or renounced. Not only are there no miracles to compel or facilitate belief, but there are obstacles in the way of new inquirers, which we cannot, at times, but lament. We do not always remember that it was mercy, not anger, which excluded our first parents from Paradise when they were unable to obey its laws, and guarded the entrance with a sword of flame.

Rationality and freedom, led by a love of good for its own sake, are the appropriate guides to the gates of the New Jerusalem. All other motives and means

only prompt us to "climb up some other way." It is a profound conviction of this, which has helped to lead the members of this Church, in their fear of proselytism, to go perhaps to the opposite extreme of doing less than a love of the neighbor should prompt them to do; of being less earnest and active than they should be in diffusing a knowledge of the truth. At least, it has brought upon them a frequent charge of coldness and indifference, a part of which may be deserved.

The absolute universality of the truths of the New Jerusalem, expose it to a singular diversity of accusations. With some, especially in Germany, it has been a fashion to call it a merely "mathematical" religion, because Swedenborg was himself one of the first mathematicians of his age, and the system which he reveals is precise and definite in its principles and conclusions, and uses a rigorous logic, and tests its truths by the universality of their application. By others it is called a "beautiful imagination," which is constructed of no better material than mere fantasy, and takes captive only those minds which fancy rules. The answer to both of these objections is, that it is at once in the highest degree mathematical, and in the most beautiful way imaginative. There are some who love to present it, or to perceive it, under one aspect, and some under another; and it is ready to give all what they ask; it is glad to come and offer its gifts to all in their own

homes. For it reveals to mankind, that between reason and imagination there is no discrepancy, no antagonism. All the powers of the mind are brethren; and it is only error—never truth—which kindles hostility among them.

It has been also said, that there is nothing new in it; that every one of its doctrines may be found somewhere, in some one or other of the religions which have dwelt upon earth; and the vast and various learning of Swedenborg is supposed to explain this fact. In this, also, there is some truth; for every religion was the gift of God, given because it contained some saving truths. But these truths were partial, imperfect, and isolated. Now, however, they have come together. The central principles which confirm and illustrate them all, and give to each the strength of the whole, are now brought within the reach of the human intellect. The scattered gems are gathered, and set as in a golden crown, where every one is brighter for the light of all the rest; and the crown is placed upon the Head of Him who is Himself the Head of the Church, the Source of all Being and all Good, Lord over all.





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